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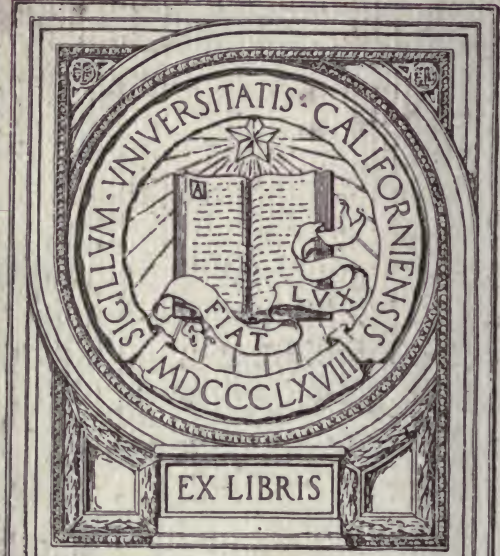
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WILHELM MEISTER'S APPRENTICESHIP

A NOVEL

FROM THE GERMAN OF

GOETHE

TRANSLATED BY

R. DILLON BOYLAN ESQ.

COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME

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PREFACE.

It has been observed, by a very profound German critic,* that the periods of Goethe's outward life are most intimately connected with the eras of his literary career; and they are generally divided into three principal periods, which have been designated as the sentimental and intense, the ideal, and the elegant. In the former, Goetz von Berlichingen and Werther are the chief illustrations of his genius; and in those two works, Goethe found means to gratify his strongest youthful propensities—the one, for German things and manners; the other, for the delineation of joys and sorrows, common to humanity, which agitated his bosom. The character of his works, at this period, was national, full of that German spirit, for which Lessing fought so manfully, and which Goethe expressed with matchless felicity.

Between the first and second eras of his literary career, an interval of twelve years elapsed, during which he produced nothing very considerable, but it was, at this time, that he visited Italy. If, as it has been said, his taste had previously inclined to the Flemish school, it was after his visit to Italy that his eyes opened to the full perception of high art. His rich and fertile spirit, which embraced at once the Lofty, the Child-like, and the Lovely, now turned to the Noble and the Elevated. In place of his former principle of naturalness or reality, now arose that of Ideality—that pure Ideality which transports nature into the regions of Idea and pure Beauty. The three great works which fall within this era, are William Meister, Faust, and Hermann and Dorothea.

What Goethe really intended by the first of these performances must remain, to some degree, a mystery. Nevertheless, Wilhelm Meister must ever be considered as one of the Author's most

* The writer of the article *Goethe* in the *Conversations-Lexicon*, elegantly presented to the English public by Mrs. Austin, in her 'Characteristics of Goethe.'

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admirable works, for in that and Faust are combined all the universality of his genius. If, with reference to Goethe himself, we compare Werther with Wilhelm Meister, we shall see, that in the former he is still wrestling with life and destiny; in the latter, that he has vanquished them, and has found the remedy for evil, in the harmonious culture of his moral Being.

Those who read Wilhelm Meister for the mere attractions of incident, character, or description, will probably be disappointed in their expectations. But it will be found full of interest to him who considers it as deciphering, according to the Author's adopted conclusion, the riddle of human life, who loves to pursue the workings of his mind, to track the strange, enigmatical, tortuous wanderings of his genius, or to engage in the ever-baffled, yet attractive chase after his meaning, through the labyrinth of his flowing style, and multifarious imagery. The appearance of Wilhelm Meister gave rise to a species of novel, which had previously been unknown in Germany, but has since very generally prevailed, not only in that country, but in England and elsewhere. The Author takes up a fictitious or historical personage, and in the narrative of his life, in accordance with his own views and maxims, gradually developes the peculiar art, to which his hero has devoted himself. But Wilhelm Meister went somewhat beyond the sphere of such imaginary portraits. It could not have been the mere design of the Author, to describe the progress of a youth in the dramatic art, although a large portion of the work relates to the drama, for in the last four books that topic is wholly dismissed, and another object is brought prominently forward. We now acquire a faint perception of the Author's aim, to describe the general growth and ripening of a youth of talent into Man. His passion for the drama is only a transition state, and brings no permanent satisfaction. His education for life, for free and active exertion in a higher field, seems to be the true end.

It follows from this indistinct enunciatiou of the Author's meaning, that no book has been more generally misunderstood. Some have rejected it, as an unintelligible treatise on metaphysics, under the garb of an ill-arranged fiction, whilst others have

praised it extravagantly, as displaying a wonderful knowledge of the actual world, and delineating a host of natural characters and situations. The characters, however, may be considered rather as personifications of distinct trains of thought, than as real beings, such as we meet with in the world. On the whole, it is a strange romance: it attracts us with an irresistible charm: during the perusal, we seem to wander from one half-resolved doubt to another, until, at the end of our pilgrimage, we begin to suspect that the writer has been intentionally misleading us into the belief that there exists some deep mystery in his pages. Alternately attracted and repelled, we at last take refuge in the conviction that our Author is one of the Inspired, a true and original Genius, notwithstanding our inability to penetrate his views, or to comprehend why he is at times so obscure and unintelligible, and at others so profound.

We cannot conclude without bearing testimony to the merits of Mr. Carlyle's admirable version of the *Lehrjahre*, which is so faithful and vigorous, and altogether so satisfactory, that had Mr. Bohn been at liberty to introduce it into his Standard Library, there would have been no occasion for any other labourer in the same field.

The *Wanderjahre* of Goethe continues and concludes the career of Wilhelm Meister. This work, which has never been presented to the public in an English form, is in preparation as a sequel to the present volume.

R. D. B.

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WILHELM MEISTER'S APPRENTICESHIP.

CHAPTER I.

The performance lasted till a late hour. Old Barbara went repeatedly to the window and listened for the rolling of carriages. She was expecting Mariana, her pretty mistress, who dressed in the character of a young officer, had charmed the public in that evening's performance, and her impatience became greater than was usual on occasions when she had only a plain supper to prepare. Mariana was now to be surprised by a package, which Norberg, a rich young merchant, had forwarded by post, to afford evidence that even in absence he thought of his love.

In the character of old servant, confidant, adviser, manager and housekeeper, Barbara possessed the right of breaking seals, and she was less able to resist her curiosity this evening, as the favour of the generous lover was a subject of greater anxiety to herself, even than to Mariana. To her extreme joy, she had found that the package contained a fine piece of muslin and some ribbons of the latest pattern for Mariana, together with a roll of cotton, some neckhandkerchiefs, and an enclosure of money for herself. With what tenderness and gratitude did she not call to mind the absent Norberg, and thought only of representing him to her mistress in the most favourable light, of reminding her how deeply she was indebted to him, and how much he was entitled to expect from her constancy.

The muslin set off by the colours of the half unfolded ribbons, lay like a Christmas present upon the little table,

the position of the candles enhanced their brilliancy, and every thing was ready, when the old woman recognising Mariana's foot upon the stairs, hastened to meet her. How great was her astonishment when the young female officer, regardless of her caresses, hurried past her with unusual speed and emotion, flung her hat and sword upon the table, and paced restlessly up and down the room, without condescending to bestow even a glance upon the festive illuminations.

"What is the matter, dear?" exclaimed the old servant with astonishment, "for Heaven's sake, what ails you, child? Behold these presents! From whom can they come, but from your most affectionate of friends? Norberg has sent you this piece of muslin for a night dress, he will be here presently himself, he seems to become fonder and more generous than ever."

Old Barbara turned round and was about to show the presents with which she herself had been remembered, when Mariana turning away from them exclaimed with vehemence, "Away, away! I will hear nothing of all this to-day. I have listened to you because you wished it to be so! When Norberg returns, I am his, I am yours! Do with me what you will, but until then, I am my own, and if you had a thousand tongues you should never persuade me from my purpose. I will give myself wholly to him who loves me, and whom I love. No grimaces! I will abandon myself to this passion as if it were to last for ever."

Barbara was not deficient in remonstrances and reasons, but when in the course of the dispute, she became violent and bitter, Mariana sprang at her and clasped her firmly. The old servant laughing aloud, exclaimed, "I must take care that she resumes her female attire, if I mean to be sure of my life. Come, strip! I hope the girl will beg pardon for what is inflicted on me by the wayward boy. Off then with the coat—off with every thing instantly! It is an unsuitable garb and dangerous for you, as I find to my cost. These epaulets make you rash."

Barbara took hold of her. Mariana disengaged herself. "Not so fast!" she exclaimed, "I expect a visit to-night."

"That is not proper," replied the servant, "you do

not surely expect that tender fledgeling, the merchant's son!" "Even that same," returned Mariana.

"It seems that generosity is to be your ruling passion," answered the old woman with malice. "You are taking to minors and pennyless people, with great eagerness. It is no doubt charming to be worshipped as a disinterested benefactress."

"Sneer as you please," she interrupted, "I love him, I love him! With what rapture do I now utter this word for the first time. This is the passion, which I have acted so often, but of which in reality I have had no conception. Yes! I will throw myself upon his neck, and embrace him as if I were to hold him for ever. I will display all my love and enjoy his in its full extent."

"Be temperate," said Barbara calmly, "be temperate: I must interrupt your rapture with an observation. Norberg is coming. He will be here in a fortnight. Here is his letter which accompanied the presents."

"And even," said Mariana, "if to-morrow's dawn were to deprive me of my friend, I would conceal it from my myself. A fortnight! What an eternity! In a fortnight what may not occur? What changes may happen!"

Wilhelm entered. She flew to meet him with animation, and with indescribable rapture he embraced the red uniform and pressed the gentle wearer to his heart. But who may venture to pourtray the happiness of two lovers? In whom would it seem becoming to describe the scene? Old Barbara went grumbling away. We shall retire with her, and leave the happy pair alone.

CHAPTER II.

When Wilhelm saluted his mother on the following morning she informed him that his father was exceedingly displeased, and intended to forbid in future his daily visit to the theatre. "Although, I myself," she continued, "frequently go thither with pleasure, I could often execrate it, as my domestic happiness is destroyed by your immoderate passion for that amusement. Your father constantly asks,

'of what use can it be? How can any one so waste his time?'"

"I have often been compelled to listen to him," replied Wilhelm, "and have perhaps answered him too hastily. But for heaven's sake, mother, is every thing useless which does not put money in our purse, or fails to procure us some desirable property? Had we not room enough, for example, in our old house? And why was it necessary to build a new one? Does not my father every year devote a considerable portion of the profits of his business to the decoration of his apartments? Are not these silken tapestries and this English furniture likewise useless? Could we not be content with humbler necessaries? At least I know that these painted walls, these constantly recurring flowers, garlands, baskets and figures produce a very disagreeable effect upon me. They look to me exactly like our drop scene at the theatre. But how different is the impression when I sit before that! Wait ever so long, we know at all events that it must rise at last, and that we shall then behold an infinite variety of objects to amuse, instruct and elevate us."

"Only act with moderation," continued his mother; "your father himself enjoys evening amusements, but he fancies that it distracts your attention, and in fine I have to bear the blame, when he is angry. Often must I endure his censure for that wretched puppet-show which I gave you at Christmas, some twelve years ago, and which first gave you a taste for theatricals."

"Do not blame the puppet-show," he replied, "do not repent of your love and attention to me! Those were the first happy moments which I enjoyed in the new uninhabited house. I have the whole scene before my eyes this very instant. I feel how strange it appeared to me, when after the customary distribution of the Christmas presents, we were desired to take our seats before a door which led into an adjoining room. It opened, but not that we might promenade to and fro as formerly; the entrance was replete with preparations for a festival. A high porch had been erected which was concealed by a mysterious curtain. At first we all stood at a distance, and as our curiosity increased to discover what shining clattering articles were hidden

behind the half transparent covering, we were directed each to take his seat and wait with patience.

"We all sat down and were silent, a whistle gave the signal, the curtain rose aloft and discovered a view of the Temple, painted deep red. The high priest Samuel appeared with Jonathan, and their strangely alternating voices astonished me in the highest degree. Saul entered soon afterwards, greatly perplexed at the impertinence of the huge warrior who had challenged him and his host. How overjoyed I felt when the diminutive son of Jesse stepped forward with crook and shepherd's scrip and sling, exclaiming, 'Most mighty King and Sovereign Lord! let the courage of no one be depressed on this account. If your Majesty will permit me, I am ready to go forth and encounter this mighty giant.' The first act ended, and the spectators were curious to know what farther would take place, each one wishing that the music might soon cease. At last the curtain rose again. David dedicated the carcase of the monster to the birds of the air, and the beasts of the field. The Philistine defied him, stamped vehemently with both feet, and fell at last like a clod of earth, giving a fine effect to the whole representation. How the virgins then sang, 'Saul hath slain his thousands, but David his tens of thousands!' The giant's head was carried before his little conqueror and he received the King's daughter as his bride; but I felt vexed amid all my joy, that the successful prince was such a dwarf. For pursuant to the common idea of the great Goliath, and the little David, they had both been carefully constructed of characteristic dimensions. Tell me, I beg of you, what has become of those puppets? I have promised to shew them to a friend whom I have greatly delighted lately by informing him of this child's sport."

"I am not surprised that you remember these things so accurately, for you took the greatest interest in them at the time. I recollect how you purloined the little book and learned the whole piece by heart. I discovered it first one evening when you formed a Goliath and David of wax, you made them declaim against each other, and at last gave the giant a blow and then fixed his shapeless head in the hand of the little David, stuck upon a large pin with a waxen handle. I enjoyed at the time so much sincere maternal pleasure at

your good memory and pathetic recitation that I at once determined to present you with the whole wooden troop. I had no idea then that it would occasion me so many sorrowful hours."

"Do not repent of it," said Wilhelm, "for this entertainment has afforded us many happy moments." With this, he obtained the keys, hastened and found the puppets and was for a moment transported back to those times, when they appeared to him to have life, and when he fancied he could animate them by the impulse of his voice and the motion of his hands. He took them to his room and put them by carefully.

CHAPTER III.

If first love be as I hear it generally asserted, the most exquisite sensation which a heart can at any time experience, then indeed we must account our hero trebly happy that he was allowed to enjoy the rapture of this enchanting season in all its perfection. But few persons are so peculiarly blest, since the greater number are led by their earlier feelings through a school of rough experience, in which after a period of uncertain happiness they are compelled to renounce their fondest wishes and to learn for ever to endure the privation of what once appeared to be their highest bliss.

Wilhelm's love for this charming maiden soared high on the wings of imagination; after a short acquaintance he had secured her attachment, and found himself in possession of a being, whom he loved devotedly, even adored, for she had first appeared to him in the favourable light of theatrical enchantment, and his passion for the stage was connected with his first love for the sex. His youth allowed him to enjoy every pleasure which had been exalted and maintained by the liveliness of his fancy. And the very condition of his mistress imparted a peculiarity to her conduct which increased his attachment exceedingly. The apprehension lest her lover might inopportunely discover her other connexions, imparted to her an amiable appearance of timidity and bashfulness, her fondness for him

was undoubted, her very apprehensions appeared to increase her affection, and she was the loveliest of creatures in his arms.

When he awoke from the first intoxication of joy and looked back upon his life and circumstances, every thing appeared to him in a new light, his duties were holier, his inclinations higher, his knowledge plainer, his talents stronger, his intentions more decided. It was easy for him therefore to adopt a plan to escape the reproaches of his father, to tranquillize his mother, and to enjoy Mariana's love without interruption. He was punctual in the discharge of his daily duty, usually avoided the theatre, was amusing at supper in the evening, and when all were in bed, stole gently off, through the garden, enveloped in his mantle, and hastened to his love with all the feelings of Lindor and Leander in his heart.

"What do you bring with you?" asked Mariana one evening when he produced a package, which old Barbara watched attentively, in hopes of receiving an agreeable present. "You cannot guess," rejoined Wilhelm.

Mariana was astonished and Barbara annoyed, when the unfolded napkin displayed only a confused heap of puppets a span long. Mariana laughed aloud when Wilhelm commenced to untwist the entangled wires and to display each figure alone. Old Barbara retired in ill-humour.

A trifle is sufficient to amuse two lovers, and our friends were therefore highly delighted this evening. The little troop was assembled, each figure was examined attentively and laughed at in succession. King Saul in his black velvet gown and golden diadem did not please Mariana at all, she said he looked too stiff and pedantic; Jonathan pleased her better, with his smooth chin, red and yellow robe and turban. She soon learned skilfully to turn him on his wires, to make him bow and pronounce declarations of love. But she would not bestow the least attention upon the prophet Samuel, although Wilhelm praised his little breastplate, and related how the taffeta of which his dress was composed, had been taken from an old gown of his grandmother's. David was too small and Goliath too large; she held by Jonathan. She could manage him so expertly, till at last she began to transfer her caresses from the puppet to our friend,

and so again upon this occasion as heretofore a trifling sport became the forerunner of happy hours.

They were awakened from the pleasures of their soft dreams by a noise which arose in the street. Mariana called to Barbara, who was busied as usual in preparing the theatrical wardrobe for the next performance. She stated that a company of jovial companions were just then breaking up from the Italian Tavern, close at hand, where over a supper of fresh oysters, which had just arrived, the champagne had by no means been spared.

"What a pity!" said Mariana, "that it did not occur to us sooner, we might have enjoyed ourselves."

"There is time enough yet," replied Wilhelm, as he gave Barbara a louis d'or, "get us what we require, and you shall share it with us."

The old lady stirred herself, and in a short time a neat table with a handsome collation stood before the lovers. They made Barbara sit down with them, and they eat, drank, and enjoyed themselves.

On such occasions, amusement never flags. Mariana took up Jonathan again, and the old servant directed the conversation to Wilhelm's favourite topic. "You told us once," she said, "about the first representation of a puppet show on Christmas eve: it was a pleasant story. You were interrupted just as the ballet was about to commence. We now know the company which produced such wonderful effects."

"O, yes!" said Mariana: "So tell us again how you were amused."

"It is a delightful sensation, dear Mariana," said Wilhelm, "to remember by-gone times and old harmless delusions, particularly when we have attained an elevation from whence we can look around us, and survey the journey we have travelled. It is so pleasant to call to mind with satisfaction the many obstacles which with painful feelings we may often have considered as insuperable, and to compare all that we now are, with what we were then endeavouring to become. But inexpressibly happy do I feel at this moment, when I can speak to you of the past, and look forward into those bright regions of the future, through which we shall wander together hand in hand!"

"But what about the ballet?" interrupted Barbara. "I fear it did not go off as well as it should have done."

"O yes!" interrupted Wilhelm, "it succeeded admirably. And certainly as long as I live, I shall never forget those strange dances of Moors, shepherds and dwarfs of both sexes. At the fall of the curtain, the door closed, and our little party hastened away to bed, quite joyful with excitement. I remember well that I was unable to close my eyes, that I was anxious to be told a deal more in reply to my numerous questions, and that I would scarcely allow the maid to depart, who had taken us to bed.

"But on the following morning, alas! the magical apparatus had all disappeared, the mysterious curtain was removed, we could once more pass unimpeded through the doorway, from one room to another, and our manifold adventures had left no trace behind. My brothers and sisters ran about with their playthings, but I passed quietly through the rooms, and thought it impossible that nothing should remain but two door posts, of all the enchantment which had existed yesterday. In truth, the man who has lost his beloved, can scarcely be unhappier than I then was." A look of rapture which he turned on Mariana at that moment, testified how little he feared being reduced to such an extremity.

CHAPTER IV.

"My sole object was now," continued Wilhelm, "to witness a second representation of the piece. I entreated my mother, and she, at an opportune time, endeavoured to persuade my father to comply. But her labour was vain. He maintained that none but pleasures of rare occurrence possess any value, that neither children nor old persons prize those blessings which are of daily enjoyment.

"We might, perhaps, have been compelled to wait till the return of Christmas, if the contriver and secret director of the entertainment had not himself felt a desire to repeat the performance, in order that he might produce in the afterpiece a new harlequin, expressly prepared for the occasion.

"A young artillery officer, of great talent, and skilled in mechanical contrivances, had during the building of our house, rendered my father essential services, for which he was well rewarded, and anxious to testify his gratitude to our little family at Christmas, he had presented us with a fully appointed theatre, which in the hours of leisure he had constructed, carved and decorated. He was the person, who assisted by a servant, had arranged the puppets, and by disguising his voice, had played the different characters. He found no difficulty in overcoming the reluctance of my father, who from complaisance yielded to a friend, what from principle he had denied to his children. At length, the theatre was again erected, the neighbouring families were invited, and the piece was once more repeated.

"If upon the first representation I had experienced the delight of surprise and astonishment, I now felt an extreme pleasure in observing and inquiring. *How* it was all contrived was my great object to discover. I was sensible from the beginning, that the puppets did not themselves speak. I suspected, moreover, that they did not move of their own accord; but how was all so well contrived, and how did they appear to speak and move spontaneously?—and where could the lights and the people be? These difficulties distressed me the more, as I wished, at the same time, to form one of the enchanted and the enchanters, to take a secret part in the play, and as a spectator to enjoy the pleasure of the illusion.

"The play being ended, preparations were made for the afterpiece, while the company rose and entered into conversation together. I pressed closer to the door, and concluded from the noise within, that some packing up was going on. I raised the outside curtain, and peeped between the posts. My mother observed it, and drew me back, but I had seen enough to know that friends and foes, Saul and Goliath, and all the others, whoever they might be, were packed together in one box, and thus my half satisfied curiosity was still, further excited. I had, moreover, to my great astonishment observed the Lieutenant extremely busy in the interior of the temple. From this time forth, Harlequin, however featly he might dance, possessed no charm for me. I was lost in deep thought, and became at once satisfied and dissatisfied by my discovery. Upon acquiring a little know-

ledge, I felt as if I had learnt nothing, and I was right, for I could not understand the connection of the parts, and upon that in truth everything depends."

CHAPTER V.

"CHILDREN, in regular and well-appointed houses," Wilhelm continued, "have an instinct, resembling that possessed by rats and mice; they watch all crevices and holes, where they think they may procure some forbidden dainty, and they enjoy it with a species of secret, stolen pleasure, which in fact forms the chief part of childhood's happiness.

"I was more expert than my brothers, in discovering any key which might have been left accidentally in its lock. The greater the reverence of my heart for those well-fastened doors, which I was obliged to pass by for weeks and months, and into which I could do no more than cast a furtive glance when our mother opened the sanctuary, to take something therefrom,—the quicker was I to seize any opportunity which the carelessness of the housekeeper permitted.

"It is easy to suppose that the door of the store room was that to which my attention was most actively directed. There are few of the fancied joys of life, which equalled my happiness when my mother occasionally summoned me to assist her in carrying anything out, upon which occasions, I might thank her generosity or my own dexterity for the acquisition of a few dried plums. The gathered treasures of the place bewildered my imagination by their variety, and the charming perfume exhaled from such a collection of spices, affected me so sensibly, that I never missed an opportunity, when near, of inhaling the dainty atmosphere. One Sunday morning, when my mother's movements were hastened by the church bells, the key of this precious room was left in the door, whilst the whole house lay in a deep Sabbath stillness. As soon as I made the discovery, I walked quietly backwards and forwards several times, till at last approaching softly, I opened the door, and at one step found myself in the presence of so many long wished for sources of happiness. I surveyed boxes, bags, chests, drawers and glasses, with quick and

doubtful eye, uncertain what I should select and take, till finally I helped myself to some of my dear dried plums, and added a few preserved apples and some candied citron. With this booty I was about to retreat, when a couple of boxes attracted my attention, from the half-closed lids of which, some wires furnished with little hooks, protruded. With joyous anticipations I seized my treasure, and with supreme delight discovered within, all those heroes, who to me were a very world of delight. I was about to take up the topmost figure, to examine him, and then to draw out the undermost, but I soon entangled the delicate wires, grew frightened and alarmed, more especially as the cook at the very moment made some noise in the adjoining kitchen, so I packed them together as well as I could, shut up the box, having taken nothing but a little book which lay at the top, containing the Drama of David and Goliath. With this booty I made my escape and took refuge in a garret.

"From this moment I devoted all my hours of solitude to the perusal of the play, to learning it by heart, and to imagining how splendid it would be, could I only accompany my recitation by imparting animation to the figures. I was soon transformed in fancy into David and Goliath. In all corners of the house, in the attic, the stable, and the garden, under all circumstances, I studied the piece intently, assumed all the parts and learned them by heart, supporting myself the chief characters, and permitting the others to occupy my memory as inferior satellites. For example, the courageous speech of David, when he challenges the boasting giant, Goliath, was day and night in my memory. I murmured it over perpetually, without attracting the attention of any one but my father, who sometimes overhearing my sudden declamation, would silently praise the admirable memory of his son, who could retain so much, from so few recitations.

"This made me bolder, and one evening I recited the greater part of the piece before my mother, having previously converted some pieces of wax into actors. She suspected me, questioned me closely, and I confessed.

"Fortunately this discovery was made at a time when the Lieutenant had expressed a wish to be allowed to initiate me into the secret. My mother soon informed him of my unexpected talents, and he then managed to persuade her to

allow him the use of a couple of rooms in the upper story, which were generally empty, in one of which the spectators might sit, and in the other the actors perform, whilst the proscenium might again fill up the opening between the doors. My father had allowed his friend to make all these preparations, conniving at them in silence, in pursuance of his maxim, that we should never allow children to know the extent of our affection for them, lest their demands should become inordinate. He thought that parents should be reserved even in amusing their children, and should sometimes interrupt their pleasures, to prevent them from becoming presumptuous and forward."

CHAPTER VI.

"THE Lieutenant now set up his theatre and took charge of everything. I remarked that during the week, he came to the house at unusual hours, and I suspected his object. My anxiety increased beyond measure, as I knew perfectly well that before Sunday I should not be allowed to take part in the preparations. The long wished for day at length arrived. The Lieutenant came at five o'clock in the evening and took me with him. I entered, quivering with delight, and saw on both sides of the theatre the puppets suspended in order, as they were to appear. I marked them carefully, and ascended the step which raised me above the stage, so that I now surveyed the little world below. It was not without reverence that I looked between the scenes, recollecting what a splendid effect the whole would produce, and sensible of the great mysteries into which I was initiated. We made one trial, which was successful.

"The next day a party of children being invited, we performed capitally, with the exception that in the intensity of my excitement, I let poor Jonathan fall, and was obliged to stretch out my arm to take him up again, an accident which completely destroyed the illusion, occasioned loud laughter, and vexed me unspeakably. But this misfortune seemed to gratify my father exceedingly. He prudently concealed his extreme satisfaction at observing the great cleverness of his son, and at the conclusion of the piece, he dwelt chiefly upon

the faults, and remarked that it would have been extremely pretty, only for a failure in this or that particular.

"All this grieved me. I was sad for the whole evening, but by the returning morning I had slept away all my sorrow, and felt happy in the reflection, that but for a single mishap my performance would have been faultless. Add to this, the applause of the spectators, whose approval was unanimous. They thought that the Lieutenant was successful in managing the intonation of the voices, though his declamation was stiff and affected, whilst the new debutant had given the speeches of David and Jonathan admirably. My mother especially applauded the independent tone with which I had challenged Goliath, and presented the modest victor to the king.

"To my great joy the theatre now continued open, and as Spring was approaching and we could dispense with fires, I spent my holidays and play hours in my garret, making the puppets go through their performances. I often invited my brothers and my friends, and when they could not come, I was content to be alone. My imagination brooded over that little world, and soon assumed another form.

"Before I had many times performed the first piece, for which my theatre and the actors had been arranged and decorated, they ceased to afford me any pleasure. But amongst some books of my grandfather, the *German Theatre* and some translated Italian Operas having fallen into my hands, I became at once immersed in them, and after reckoning up the number of the characters, without further preparation, I proceeded to exhibit the piece. Under these circumstances, King Saul enveloped in his black robe was now forced to personate Cato or Darius, on which occasions, it is proper to observe, that the entire piece was never performed, seldom indeed, more than the fifth act, in which the death-scene occurred.

"It was natural that Operas with their many vicissitudes and adventures should possess the greatest attraction for me. They furnished stormy seas, deities who descended in clouds, and what afforded me supreme happiness—thunder and lightning. I contrived everything with pasteboard, paint and paper, produced night admirably, and made terrific lightning. It sometimes happened that my thunder was a

failure, but that was not of much importance. The Operas afforded me frequent opportunities for introducing my David and Goliath, who in the regular drama were hardly admissible. Every day I grew more attached to the narrow spot where I enjoyed so many pleasures, and I must admit that the fragrant odour which the puppets had contracted in the store room contributed somewhat to produce this effect.

"The decorations of my theatre were now tolerably complete, and the habit I had acquired in youth of drawing with the compass, cutting out pasteboard and painting pictures, served me now in hour of need. I was sadly grieved however when, as often happened, my limited stock of actors proved inadequate to the representation of grand performances.

"My sisters' amusement of dressing and undressing their dolls, suggested to me the propriety of supplying my puppets with an appropriate wardrobe. Accordingly I cut the dresses for their bodies, sewed them together as well as I was able, and from the savings of my pocket money I bought some new ribbon and spangles, and by begging many a piece of satin, I collected gradually a theatrical wardrobe, in which hoop dresses for the ladies were particularly remembered.

"My actors were now really provided with dresses for the most important piece, and a succession of performances might now have been fairly expected, but it happened with me as it generally does with children. They form mighty plans, commence great preparations, make a few trials, and then the entire project is abandoned. I committed this fault. Invention, and the employment of my imagination furnished me with the greatest delight. An occasional piece interested me on account of a particular scene, and immediately I commenced preparing apparel for the occasion. Under these circumstances the original wardrobe of my heroes soon fell into disorder, or was no longer in existence, so that my first great piece could not again be represented. I gave the reins to my fancy, rehearsed and prepared everlastingly, built a thousand castles in the air and forgot that I was thus undermining my little edifice."

During this narrative Mariana had found it necessary to summon up all her regard for Wilhelm, in order to conceal her fatigue. Amusing as the matter might appear to one party, it was too simple for her taste, and the accompanying

comments were far too serious. She softly pressed the foot of her lover, to afford unequivocal proofs of her attention and approval. She drank out of his glass, and Wilhelm felt convinced that no word he had uttered had been lost. After a short pause, he exclaimed, "It is your turn now, Mariana, to relate to me what were your first childish joys. Hitherto we have always been too busy with the present, to trouble ourselves about our previous course of life. But tell me—how were you brought up? What are the first vivid impressions which you remember?"

These questions would have thrown Mariana into the greatest embarrassment, if Barbara had not quickly come to her assistance. "Do you think," said the clever old woman, "that we have paid so much attention to what happened long ago, that we can have any thing worth telling, or even if we had, that we could convert it into an entertaining narrative?"

"As if that were necessary!" exclaimed Wilhelm. "I love this dear, good, amiable creature so tenderly, that I regret every moment of my life which I have spent without her. Let me at least in fancy share your bygone life. Tell me every thing, I will tell you every thing in return. Let us, if possible, deceive ourselves, and endeavour to win back those times which have been lost to love."

"If you are so bent upon this," said Barbara, "we can satisfy you. But tell us first how your taste for theatrical entertainments gradually grew, how you practised and how you improved so happily that you are now esteemed a first-rate actor? Doubtless you have had no want of merry adventures. It is not worth while retiring now to bed. I have still a bottle in reserve, and who knows when we may meet again in such happiness and content?"

Mariana glanced at her with a dissatisfied look which Wilhelm did not observe, and he proceeded with his narration

CHAPTER VII.

"THE amusements of youth, as my acquaintances increased in number, broke in upon my quiet, lonely enjoyments. I was alternately hunter, soldier or knight, as our games might render necessary, and I always possessed this trifling advantage over my comrades, that I was able to furnish them properly with all their necessary equipments. The swords were always of my manufacture, I ornamented and gilded the sledges, and I was impelled by a secret instinct to dress our militia after the antique. Helmets were made and ornamented with paper feathers. Shields and even coats of armour were prepared, and in the performance of these works, many a needle was broken by the sempstresses and household assistants.

"One portion of my young companions were now fully armed. The rest were gradually, but less effectively equipped, and a respectable corps was collected together. We marched about the court-yards and gardens, valiantly struck each other's heads and shields, from which arose many a misunderstanding which was quickly forgotten.

"This amusement, which afforded infinite entertainment to the others, was repeated but a few times, when it ceased to satisfy me. The sight of so many armed figures necessarily awoke in me those ideas of chivalry, which for some time had filled my head, since I had commenced the perusal of old romances.

"The story of 'Jerusalem Delivered,' Koppen's translation of which had fallen into my hands, soon gave my wavering thoughts a decided turn. True, I was unable to read the whole poem, but there were passages which I knew by heart, and the descriptions captivated me. Clorinda, above all, fascinated me with her noble deeds and bearing. The female heroism, the sustained perfection of her character, more affected my mind, which was just then unfolding, than the artificial charms of Armida, though her garden was by no means an object to be despised.

"But a hundred and a hundred times, as I have walked at evening upon the balcony which is erected between the gables of the house, and surveyed the surrounding scenery

whilst the horizon was suffused with the gleaming splendour of a setting sun, the stars burst forth twittering, and night came on from every corner and depth, and the cry of the grasshopper resounded through the solemn silence,—then have I a hundred times recited to myself the history of the mournful combat between Tancred and Clorinda.

"However natural it might seem that I should advocate the Christian enterprise, I felt a cordial interest in the Pagan heroine, when she undertook to fire the great tower of the besiegers. And when Tancred afterwards meets the supposed warrior by night, and the combat begins beneath a veil of gloom and they fight with bravery, I never could recite the words—

> "Clorinda's course is now for ever past,
> The hour approaches which must prove her last,"

without my eyes filling with tears, which flowed in torrents when the unfortunate lover plunges his sword into her bosom, unclasps the helmet of the dying heroine, and recognizing her with a shudder, hastens to bring water for her baptism.

"But how did my heart overflow when in the enchanted forest, Tancred's sword strikes the tree, blood flows from the wound, and a voice echoes in his ears that he has again wounded Clorinda, and that he is destined by fate ever thus unconsciously to destroy the object of his dearest love!

"The story filled my imagination so completely that what I had read became henceforth faintly embodied in my mind, and I grew so captivated with the idea that I determined to perform it after some fashion. I undertook to enact the parts of Tancred and Rinaldo, and found two suits of armour ready for the purpose, which I had some time previously prepared. The one formed of dark grey paper and ornamented with scales would serve for the solemn Tancred, the other bright with gold and silver might adorn the brilliant Rinaldo. In the excitement of my anticipations I related the project to my companions. They were charmed with the design, but were at a loss to understand how all this was to be represented, and above all, represented by them.

"I allayed their apprehensions without much difficulty. I determined to avail myself of a couple of rooms in the

house of a playfellow, without reflecting that his old aunt might refuse to give them up to us. With equal rashness I conceived the project of my theatre, of which I had formed no other idea than that it was to be fixed in a framework, that the scenery was to be constructed out of folding screens and the floor to be covered with an ample cloth. But from whence all the indispensable materials were to come, never once occurred to me.

"We found an excellent expedient to provide the grove. We earnestly entreated an old servant of one of the families, who had lately become a woodman to furnish us with some young birch and fir trees, and they were actually brought to us more quickly than we could have expected. But we found great difficulty in determining how to complete our arrangements before the trees should wither. Good advice would now have been invaluable. We had neither house, theatre, nor curtains. The folding scenes were all our treasure.

"In our perplexity we had recourse once more to the Lieutenant, and gave him a long account of all the fine things we intended. Ill as he understood us, he promised every assistance, and for this purpose he heaped into a small room all the tables he could find in the house and neighbourhood, fixed the folding screens to them, contrived a back view of green curtains, and arranged our trees together in a row.

"The long looked for evening came at last. The candles were lighted, the maids and the children had taken their places, the whole corps of heroes were equipped, and the play was about to commence, when it occurred to us for the first time that no one knew what he was to say. Engaged in my inventions, and quite absorbed by my own pursuits, I had forgotten that the actors should each learn an appropriate part, and in the excitement of the preparations this difficulty had never occurred to my companions. They fancied they could represent the character of heroes, and could act and speak with ease as should become the persons into whose world I had transplanted them. But when the moment arrived they all stood in astonishment enquiring, 'What was first to happen?' till I, who had previously given my attention to the character of Tancred, entered alone upon the stage, and commenced reciting some verses of the

Epic poem. But as the passage which I had selected soon changed into narrative, whilst I, in my address, had to represent a third party, and as Godfrey, whose turn it was now to speak, refused to appear, I was at length compelled to withdraw amid the loud laughter of the spectators; a catastrophe which galled me to the very soul. Our undertaking proved a complete failure. The spectators however retained their seats and were bent upon seeing something. We were all in full costume. I took courage and resolved, hit or miss, to give them David and Goliath. Some of the company had already assisted me with the puppet show, and all had witnessed it repeatedly. We accordingly apportioned the parts, each promised to exert himself to the utmost, and one little droll fellow, painting a black beard upon his chin, undertook if any obstacle should occur, to enact some drollery as Harlequin, a proposal to which I very reluctantly consented, as quite opposed to the solemnity of the performance. I vowed however at the same time, that once free from this perplexity, I never would undertake the representation of any piece, without the most careful preparation."

CHAPTER VIII.

MARIANA, overcome by sleep, leaned upon her lover, who pressed her closely to his side: he then continued his narrative, whilst old Barbara with proper precaution appropriated the rest of the wine.

"The difficulty," he said, "in which I found myself involved with my friends, by undertaking the performance of a play which had no existence, was soon forgotten. My passion for dramatising every romance that I read, every history that I learnt, was not subdued by the stubborn nature of my materials. I felt perfectly convinced that every thing which pleased as a narrative, must produce a much more powerful effect as a representation. I longed to have brought every thing before my eyes and produced upon the stage. When any historical event was related to us at school, I took particular note of any remarkable case of murder or of poisoning, when my imagination glancing rapidly over the common incidents of exposition and denoue-

ment, hastened to reach the deep interest of the fifth act. And under such influence I actually commenced the composition of some pieces beginning with the finale, although in none of them did I ever succeed in arriving at the beginning.

"At the same time impelled partly by my own fancy, and partly by the request of friends, who had acquired a taste for theatrical performances, I read through a whole collection of plays as chance threw them in my way. I was then at that happy period of life when every thing imparts pleasure, and when mere number and variety offer abundant materials for happiness. But unfortunately my taste was corrupted by another circumstance. Those pieces invariably pleased me most, in the representation of which I hoped personally to excel, and I read few of them without indulging this agreeable illusion: and as I could identify myself with every character, my active imagination soon deceived me into the belief that I was capable of representing them, and on this account in distributing the parts, I usually selected those that were not at all adapted for me, and when such a license could be permitted, it was my custom even to appropriate two.

"The resources of children at play are infinite: a wand becomes a gun, a piece of wood a sword; each bundle a doll, and every corner a habitation. Upon this principle was our theatre conducted. In perfect ignorance of our powers we boldly undertook every thing, we observed no *qui pro quo*, feeling convinced that every one would recognize in us, the characters we represented. But it happens unfortunately that our whole proceedings were of so common place and unvaried a nature, that I have not even a remarkable absurdity to relate. We first acted those few pieces in which male figures alone are introduced, subsequently we dressed some of our party in female attire, and at length we inducted our sisters into the company. In some families our performances were considered as improving in their tendency, and company was accordingly invited to witness them. Our Lieutenant of artillery did not forsake us upon such occasions. He instructed us to make our exits and our entrances, to declaim and to gesticulate. But for the most part he earned but little gratitude for his trouble, as we thought that we understood theatrical science far better than he.

"Our first passion was for tragedy, as we had often

heard and indeed believed that it was easier to write and to represent tragedy, than to excel in comedy. In addition, upon our first tragical effort, we had felt ourselves completely in our element. We sought to realise dignity of rank, and excellence of character by stiffness and affectation, and thought ourselves eminently successful: but we only felt completely happy when allowed to rage furiously, to stamp with our feet, and to fling ourselves upon the ground in madness and despair.

"Maidens and youths did not long continue these performances, before nature took her usual course, and the company began to divide into various little societies of love; since, oftentimes, it happens that a two-fold comedy is enacted upon the stage. Behind the scenes, each happy couple softly pressed hands in the most loving manner, and were lost in rapturous delight when they appeared before each other in ideal characters, adorned in theatrical attire; whilst on the other hand, a few unhappy rivals fell a prey to the pangs of jealousy, and occasioned all manner of confusion, with their insolence and malice.

"These performances, although undertaken without judgment and enacted without discretion, were not without advantage to us. They served to enable us to exercise our memories and our physical powers, and attain more ease in conversation and deportment, than persons at so early an age can easily acquire. This period formed a remarkable epoch in my history: my whole mind was now directed to the theatre, and I found no other happiness, than in reading, writing, and performing plays.

"The instruction of my tutors was, however, continued. Being destined for a life of trade, I had been placed in the counting house of a friend. But at this particular juncture, my mind became diverted more forcibly than ever from a pursuit which I deemed unworthy of me. I was anxious to dedicate my whole powers to the stage, and to seek therein my happiness and content.

"I still recollect a poem which will be found amongst my papers, in which the tragic Muse, and another female character, by which I intended to personify Trade, are made to contend vigorously for the possession of my worthy self. The idea is not original, and I forget whether the verses possess any merit, but you should see them—on account of

the apprehension and loathing, the love and passion, which predominate therein. The old female is painfully described, with her distaff in her girdle, her keys at her side, her spectacles on her nose, ever active, restless, quarrelsome, stingy, petty and annoying, and sorrowfully do I describe his condition who must bow beneath her rod and earn his servile wages in the sweat of his brow.

"But how differently did I make the other figure advance; what an apparition was she for the troubled heart! In her form of glory, she seemed in being and deportment to be a very daughter of freedom; the sense of her own innate worth imparted to her a dignity devoid of pride. Her attire was becoming; it enveloped each limb without constraint, and the rich folds of her dress like a thousand times reiterated echo, repeated the graceful motions of the Goddess. What a contrast was there! it is easy to imagine which way my heart inclined. Moreover, nothing was forgotten that could render my Muse attractive. Crowns and daggers, chains and masks, as they had been left by my predecessors, were again bestowed upon her. The contest was keen. The speeches of both parties contrasted admirably, as at fourteen years of age one is accustomed to paint the lines of black and white with sufficient distinctness. The old woman spoke like one who could stoop to pick up a pin; the other like one who could bestow kingdoms. The warning threats of the former were despised. I turned my back upon her promised wealth! naked and disinherited, I abandoned myself to the Muse, who flung her golden veil around me and concealed my destitution.

"Could I have thought, oh, my love," Wilhelm exclaimed, as he pressed Mariana tenderly to his heart, "that another and a more lovely goddess would soon appear, to strengthen my resolutions and to guide me on my way, the poem would have had a brighter turn, and a happier termination; and yet it is no poem, but truth and life to find you in my arms; let us revel in the consciousness of our sweet happiness"

The pressure of his arm, and the animation of his elevated voice awakened Mariana, she sought to conceal her embarrassment in caresses, for she had not heard one word of the latter part of his narrative, and it is to be wished that our hero for the future may obtain more attentive listeners to his charming tales.

CHAPTER IX.

Thus did Wilhelm pass his nights in the enjoyment of confiding love, and his days in the expectation of hours of renewed happiness. Even at the time when desire and hope first attracted him to Mariana, he became endowed with a new being; he felt that he had commenced a new existence, and now that he was united to her, the satisfaction of his desires had grown to be a delicious habit. His heart now sought to ennoble the object of his passion, and his spirit to exalt the maiden of his love. Even in the shortest absence, her remembrance seized him. If she had been formerly a necessity, she had now become indispensable to him, since she was attached to him by every tie of nature. His pure soul felt that she was the half and more than the half of his being; his gratitude and devotion were boundless.

And even Mariana could deceive herself for a time; she shared the feeling of his deep delight. Alas! if only the cold hand of reproof did not sometimes fall upon her heart. Even upon the bosom of Wilhelm, and under the wings of his love, she was not safe from its chill touch. And when she was again alone, and when from those clouds to which his passion had exalted her, she sank down to the consciousness of her condition, she was indeed wretched. Thoughtlessness came to her as a friend, whilst she lived in a state of mental confusion, and was either deluded as to her condition, or did not comprehend it. The circumstances to which she found herself exposed, appeared but isolated. Pleasure and pain perpetually effaced each other's impress, humiliation was compensated by vanity, and want often by momentary superfluity. She could adduce necessity and custom in her defence and justification, and thus from hour to hour, and from day to day, she banished every corroding reflection. But now the poor girl had felt herself transported for a moment into a better world, had looked down from a height of light and joy upon the desert waste of her past life, and felt what a wretched being a woman is, who whilst she excites desire, is powerless to awaken either love or respect, and found herself neither externally nor internally improved.

She was bereft of consolation. When she looked enquir-

ingly within, all was void, and her heart found no support or refuge. The more wretched she was, the more closely did she cling to her beloved. Her passion increased the more, as the dread of losing him every day grew stronger.

Wilhelm on the other hand floated aloft in more exalted regions, a new world was opened to him also, rich in glorious prospects. Scarcely had he yielded to the first excess of joy, than that vision stood brightly before his soul, which had formerly glided darkly through it. She is thine; she has given herself to thee! She, the beloved, the sought for, the adored, has given herself to thee in confidence and truth, she will not find thee ungrateful. Motionless or active he discoursed with himself, his heart continually overflowed, and in an eloquence of burning words, he uttered the most sublime thoughts. He believed that he saw the clear beckoning of Fate, who stretched out her hand to him through Mariana, to save him from the wearisome, stagnant citizen-life from which he had so long sought deliverance. To quit his father's house, to separate from his relations, appeared to him a trivial matter; he was young and new in the world, and his courage was exalted by love, to wander over its wastes in search of happiness and contentment. His destiny for the stage was now clear. The glorious goal which he saw displayed before him, seemed to approach nearer as he sought its attainment hand in hand with Mariana, and with self-contented satisfaction, he pictured to himself his success as an actor—the creator of a future national theatre, an object for which many had so often vainly sighed. Every fancy which had hitherto slumbered in the interior recesses of his soul, was now awakened. From his multifarious ideas he painted a picture in colours of love, upon a canvass of cloud, the figures of which ran sadly into each other, but the whole only produced on this account a more enchanting effect.

CHAPTER X.

He remained now at home, turning over his papers and preparing for his departure. He neglected all that related to his previous pursuits, wishing upon his journey through the world, to be free from every unpleasant recollection. Only

works of taste, the poets and the critics were admitted as well-known friends amongst his selected books, and as he had formerly availed himself but slightly of critical authors, his taste for information was now renewed, when upon glancing through his books he found that his collection of theatrical essays were for the most part uncut. In full conviction of the utility of such works he had provided himself with a large supply, although with the best intentions, he never been able to advance far in the perusal.

On the other hand he had applied himself more diligently to composition, and had even attempted every kind with which he had become acquainted.

Werner one day entered his apartment, and observing his friend to be engaged with the well-known manuscripts, exclaimed, "What, still busy with these papers? I will wager that you have no intention of finishing any of them. You are ever engaged in looking them through, but still bent upon commencing some new performance."

"To finish is not the business of the scholar, it is sufficient that he exercise himself."

"But still he finishes as well as he can."

"And yet the question might well be asked, whether one should not entertain good hopes of a youth who ceases to continue a pursuit when he finds he has undertaken something inappropriate, and is unwilling to waste his efforts upon a project which can have no value."

"I well know it was never your way to bring anything to completion. You have always wearied before one half was finished. When you were director of our puppet show, how often have new clothes been made for the dwarfish company, and new decorations prepared. At one time this, at another time that tragedy was to be represented, and you generally ended by performing some fifth act, in which everything was admirably confused, and in which the characters murdered each other."

"If you will refer to those times, whose fault was it that we tore off the garments which fitted our puppets so well, to incur the expense of a more extensive and useless wardrobe? Were not you the person who constantly had a new piece of ribbon to bargain for, and who never failed to encourage my whims and to profit by them."

Werner smiled, whilst he exclaimed, "I still remember with pleasure how I profited by your theatrical campaigns as a commissary does by war. When you were preparing your 'Jerusalem Delivered,' I gained enormously as the Venetians did formerly in similar circumstances. I know of nothing in the world more sensible than to extract advantage from the folly of others."

"I doubt if it be not a nobler pleasure to cure men of their follies."

"And if I know mankind well, that might prove a vain task, though to be sure some progress is made, when any individual wishes to become clever and rich; and this generally takes place at the expense of others."

Wilhelm answered: "I lay my hand now most opportunely upon 'The Youth at the Cross Roads,'" as he drew a manuscript from amongst his other papers; "it is at least finished, be it in other respects what it may."

"Throw it away, cast it into the fire," replied Werner; "the plot is not in the least praiseworthy, the composition distressed me enough formerly, and drew your father's anger upon you. The verses may be pretty, but the design is wholly false. I still remember that wretched wrinkled-looking sibyl, your personification of Trade. You must have taken the picture from the shop of some miserable huckster. You could then have had no idea of commerce, for I do not know any character whose mind is, was, and requires to be, more enlarged than that of a real merchant. What an improving sight is the order in which his business is conducted, which allows us at any time to survey the whole, without the necessity of entangling ourselves with details. What an advantage for the merchant is the system of book-keeping by double entry; it is one of the sublimest inventions of human genius, and every good householder should introduce it into his establishment."

"Pardon me," said Wilhelm, smiling, "you begin with the form as if that were the substance, and with your additions and your balances you commonly forget the all-important net product of life."

"But unfortunately, my friend, you do not see that form and substance are here the same, and that one cannot exist without the other. System and order increase the wish to

save and to acquire. A bad manager is contented to be ignorant of his affairs, and is unwilling to count the entries wherein he stands as debtor. On the other hand, nothing can be more delightful to a good manager, than daily to survey the amounts of his increasing happiness. Even a mischance, when it unfortunately surprises, does not terrify him, since he knows the well-earned profits which he can place in the other scale. I am convinced, my dear friend, that if you could but once experience the genuine pleasure of a life of business, you would admit that many faculties of the mind can find therein a free play."

"It is possible that the journey which I project may give rise to another way of thinking."

"Oh yes! believe me, you only need a scene of great industry to make you one of us, and upon your return you will willingly associate with those who seek to secure by every species of undertaking and speculation, to enjoy a portion of that wealth and happiness which takes its fated circuit through the world. Cast a look upon the natural and artificial products of every part of the globe,see how they have become alternately indispensable! What a delightful and intellectual anxiety, to know what is required at the precise moment, and yet either wholly fails or is difficult to procure; to satisfy the wants of all with ease and expedition, to lay in a provision with forethought, and to enjoy the advantages of each moment in this extensive circulation. This, it appears to me, is capable of proving an inexhaustible delight to every man of understanding."

Wilhelm seemed to consent, and Werner continued: "Only in the first place visit a few large commercial towns or seaports, and without doubt you will be transported with the sight. When you observe how many men are there employed, and see whence so much has come and whither it is going, you will doubtless experience delight that it should pass through your hands. You behold the smallest articles of trade in connection with the entire principles of commerce, and you will then consider that nothing is little, because every thing tends to increase the circulation from which your life draws its support."

Werner who had improved his own correct understanding by association with Wilhelm, had accustomed himself to

reflect upon his own pursuits, and upon his own business with elevation of soul, and ever considered that he performed this task with greater justice than his otherwise sensible and valued friend, who, it seemed to him, placed such excessive importance, and threw the weight of his whole soul, upon the most unreal objects in the world. He sometimes thought that he must succeed in overcoming this false enthusiasm, and that so good a man must eventually be led into the right way. In this hope he continued, "The great men of the world have appropriated the whole earth, they live in glory and superfluity, even the smallest corner of the globe is already in their possession, and that possession is secured. Offices and other civic business produce but little; where then can we find more legitimate pursuits, or juster conquests than those of commerce. The princes of this world have the rivers, the roads and the havens in their power, and extract a considerable profit from everything in course of transit; should not we then with joy embrace the opportunity of levying toll, by our activity, upon those articles which either want or luxury has rendered indispensable to man. And I can warn you, that if you will only employ your poetical fancy, you will find my goddess the invincible conqueror of your own. It is true she bears the olive branch rather than the sword, daggers and chains she knows not, she distributes crowns to her favourites, which, be it said without offence, are formed of brilliant gold, pure from the mine, and gleaming with pearls sought in the depths of the ocean by the hands of her trusty servants."

This sally vexed Wilhelm not a little, but he concealed his emotion, for he remembered that Werner was accustomed to hear his rhapsodies with resignation. In other respects he was just enough to feel content that every one should esteem his own pursuit the best, he only required that others should allow him uncontestedly to enjoy that course to which he was passionately devoted.

"And for you," cried Werner, "who sympathize so cordially in human affairs, what a spectacle will it be to behold the happiness which attends daring speculations bestowed on mankind. What is more gladdening than the sight of a vessel arriving from a prosperous voyage, or returning with a rich prize. Not only the relations, the ac-

quaintances, and the partners, but every observing stranger is delighted at witnessing the joy with which the imprisoned sailor leaps ashore even before his vessel touches land, feeling that he is once more free, and can now confide to the faithful earth all that he has rescued from the treacherous waves. All our gain, my friend, does not depend on figures, happiness is the goddess of living men, and in order really to experience her favours we must exist and behold mankind, whose exertions are earnest and whose enjoyments are deep."

CHAPTER XI.

It is now time for us to become better acquainted with the parents of our two young friends. They were men of very different dispositions, but they agreed in considering commerce as the noblest of employments, and both were extremely attentive to the smallest advantage which any species of speculation could bring. Wilhelm's father on the death of his own parent had converted into money a valuable collection of paintings, drawings, engravings, and antiquities, had completely rebuilt and furnished his house in the newest style, and had made the remainder of his property profitable in every possible way. He had lent a great part of it to the elder Werner for purposes of trade, as the latter possessed the character of an active man of business, whose speculations were generally favoured by fortune. But old Meister desired nothing so anxiously as to endow his son with qualities which he did not himself possess, and to bequeath to his children advantages, to the enjoyment of which he attached the greatest advantage. But he himself entertained a love for magnificence, for those things which strike the eye, and at the same time possess a real and lasting value. He considered that everything in a house should be solid and massive, the supply abundant, the plate heavy, the table service costly. But then his guests were few, for every entertainment was a festival, which did not admit of frequent repetition, as well on account of the expense as of the in-

convenience. His household was conducted in an unpretending and regular manner, and every attempt at animation or novelty uniformly failed to afford satisfaction.

The elder Werner in his dark and gloomy habitation led a life of a wholly different kind. When he had once transacted his daily business at the old desk in his small counting house, he was accustomed to dine well, and if possible to drink still better. But he was unable to enjoy his luxuries in solitude. He took pleasure in beholding his friends, and indeed all strangers who were in any way connected with him, seated at table in the society of his family. His chairs were antiquated, but he invited some one to sit upon them daily. His good fare attracted the attention of his guests, and no one observed that it was served on common ware. His cellar was incapable of holding much wine, but what was drunk was usually replaced by a supply of a superior kind.

Thus did these two parents pursue their career, often meeting together to consult upon their common affairs, and at the time of which we speak they had just determined to send Wilhelm from home, to engage in some transactions of business.

"He must see the world," observed old Meister, "and at the same time execute our business in some distant places. There can be no greater advantage for a young man than to be initiated early into the business of life. Your son has returned so prosperously from his journey, and has managed so well, that I am curious to see how mine will succeed. I fear his knowledge must be purchased at a dearer rate than your's."

Old Meister, who entertained a high opinion of his son's capabilities, made this observation, with the hope that his friend would contradict him, and extol the extraordinary talents of the youth. But in this he was deceived. Old Werner, who in practical matters confided in no man whom he had not proved, answered with composure, "We must try every thing—we may send him on the same journey and furnish him with written directions for his guidance; there are many debts to collect, old connections to renew, and fresh ones to form. He may also assist to forward the speculation about which I have spoken to you lately, for

unless we procure precise information on the very spot, we shall make but little progress."

"He may get ready," said old Meister, "and set out as soon as possible. But where shall we find a horse for him, adapted for such a journey?"

"We need not search far for that. A shopkeeper in H ——, who is a debtor of ours, though otherwise a very worthy person, has offered us a horse in payment of our claim. My son knows the animal and approves of it highly."

"Then he may fetch it himself. If he starts by the coach he may return by the day after to-morrow. We can in the mean time get ready his portmanteau and his letters, and by this means he may set out in the beginning of the approaching week."

Wilhelm was forthwith summoned and informed of the plan. No one could have been more delighted than he was, on perceiving within his power the means of executing his project, and on finding so favourable an opportunity provided without any trouble on his part. So strong was his affection, and so pure was his conviction that he was acting honourably in escaping from the pressure of his previous style of life, and in following a new and nobler career, that his conscience did not in the least upbraid him; he was troubled by no anxiety, and in point of fact he even considered his intended fraud as holy. He felt confident that his parents and relations would eventually praise and bless him for his determination, and he recognized in the concurrence of these events the evidence of a conducting fate.

How long did the night appear to him until the arrival of the hour when he should again behold his darling! He retired to his chamber and thought over in his mind the plan of his journey, as a conjuror or a dexterous thief in prison withdraws his feet repeatedly from the chains with which he is bound, to encourage the belief that his escape is possible, and perhaps even nearer than his short-sighted gaolers imagine.

The long-looked-for hour of night at length arrived. He left his house, flung all his troubles to the winds, and wandered through the silent streets. Having reached the great square, he raised his hands to heaven, and felt himself superior to every care as he had escaped from all anxiety.

At one moment he fancied that he was locked in the embrace of his beloved Mariana; at another moment they seemed to be enjoying together the brilliant enchantments of the stage, and whilst he was thus soaring aloft, in the delusions of fancy and lost, as it were, in the blissful regions of hope, the watchman's cry reminded him, alas! that he was still but a pilgrim on this earth.

His beloved met him on the stairs, and how beautiful she looked! she was attired in her loose white "negligée," and he thought she had never looked so charming. The gift of the absent lover was dedicated to the entertainment of a present rival, and with real passion she showered upon him all the caresses which were suggested to her by nature, or in which she had been instructed by art: it is necessary to inquire whether he felt happy and blessed?

He explained all that had occurred, and in general terms he unfolded to her his plans and his wishes. He would first endeavour, he said, to establish himself in some residence, after which he would return for her, and he hoped that she would then consent to bless him with her hand. The poor girl was silent, she made an effort to conceal her tears, and pressed her friend to her bosom. Though he interpreted her confusion favourably, he could have wished for a more decisive answer, particularly when in the most modest and endearing tones, he inquired whether he might not consider himself a father. But to this question she only answered with a sigh and with a kiss.

CHAPTER XII.

On the following morning Mariana awoke to a feeling of renewed sorrow,—she felt now that she was completely alone—she shrunk from encountering the face of day, and therefore she remained in bed and wept. Old Barbara sat down at her side, and endeavoured to persuade and console her, but she found it impossible so soon to heal a wounded heart. The moment was fast approaching to which the poor girl had long looked forward as the end of her existence.

Could any human being have been placed in a more dis-

tressing situation? her lover was absent—another and a less welcome suitor was hourly expected, and the direst calamity must necessarily ensue if the two individuals should meet. —"Tranquillize yourself, my dear!" cried old Barbara, "do not spoil those pretty eyes with tears? Is it then so great a misfortune to have two lovers? and if you can only bestow your tenderness upon one, surely it is possible for you to be grateful to the other, and he, if we may judge from his attention, deserves at least to be considered as your friend."

"My beloved," answered Mariana, bathed in tears, "had a secret misgiving that a separation was at hand." A dream discovered to him all that we have sought so anxiously to conceal. He was sleeping softly at my side. Suddenly I heard him murmur some distressing but unintelligible words, I became alarmed and awoke him. How can I describe the love, the tenderness, the transport with which he embraced me! 'Oh Mariana!' he exclaimed, 'from what anguish and distress you have delivered me! How can I evince my gratitude to you, for freeing me from such misery! I dreamt,' he continued, 'that I was in an unknown country, separated from you: but your image floated before me: I beheld you seated on a beautiful hill, the sun shone upon the spot, and how lovely you appeared! But this did not last long—presently I saw your image gliding—gliding gradually away —I stretched out my arms towards you, but they could not reach you in the distance. Your image continued to disappear gradually from me, until at length it approached a wide sheet of water, which lay at the foot of a hill, and resembled a marsh rather than a lake. Suddenly a stranger offered you his hand, he wished, it seemed, to raise you upwards, but he led you to one side, and drew you to himself. I shouted, for I was unable to reach you, but I wished to give you warning. When I tried to stir, the ground seemed to hold me fast, and if I could have succeeded in my attempt to move, the water was still between us. Though my anguish was extreme, my very cries were stifled within me.'— Such was the account poor Wilhelm gave, as he sought refuge from his terror in my embrace, and felt happy in dispelling his frightful delusion in the reality of bliss."

Old Barbara had recourse to all her prosaic powers to dispel the poetry of her friend, and to reduce it within the

limits of common life. For this purpose she adopted that admirable plan which so often succeeds with bird-catchers, when they imitate with a whistle the notes of the poor creatures who are destined to flutter shortly in the entanglement of their nets. She spoke favourably of Wilhelm and passed eloquent eulogiums upon his figure, upon the brightness of his eyes, and upon the depth of his love. The poor girl was delighted—she arose and permitted herself to be dressed, and gradually became more tranquil. "My child, my sweet love," said Barbara in a flattering tone, "I will not distress or trouble you. I have no wish to destroy your happiness. Could you misunderstand my purpose, or have you forgotten that I have ever consulted your comfort more than my own. Only express your wishes and let us consider how they may be fulfilled."

"What can I wish for!" answered Mariana, "I am wretched, wretched for life. I love him, he loves me, I see that I must separate from him, and I know not how I can survive it. Norberg is coming, to whom we are indebted for our very existence, and whom we cannot afford to lose. Wilhelm is in but indifferent circumstances, and he cannot assist me."

"Yes, he is unfortunately one of those lovers who have nothing but their hearts to offer, and such people invariably make the greatest pretensions."

"Do not jest! the poor youth intends to leave home, to go upon the stage, and then to offer me his hand."

"We have four empty hands already!"

"I have no power to choose," continued Mariana. "So do you decide for me! Reject me as you may, but be assured of one thing, it seems to me that I bear a pledge within, which ought to bind us more closely to each other: consider that, and decide whom I should forsake and whom I ought to follow?"

After a brief silence Barbara lamented that it should be the disposition of youth ever thus to fluctuate between extremes! "It will be better," she said, "to adopt a course which will ensure both pleasure and profit. Whilst you love the one, you need not reject the generosity of the other. It is essential however that we should prevent them from meeting—."

"Do as you please—I can suggest nothing, but am ready to obey," was the reply.

"We enjoy this advantage," continued Barbara, "that we can indulge the manager's humour, who is so proud of the morals of his company. Both these lovers are already accustomed to act with secrecy and caution. I will arrange the time and opportunity, but you must act for the future according to my direction: many chances may help us. Suppose for instance, Norberg were to arrive now during Wilhelm's absence. I wish you good fortune and a son to enjoy it. He will have a rich father."

These suggestions brought but temporary consolation to Mariana. She was unable to reconcile her situation with her feelings or with her conscience, and she wished moreover to forget the misery of her condition, but a thousand trivial circumstances continually forced them back upon her memory.

CHAPTER XIII.

WILHELM in the mean time had completed his little journey, and not having found his friend at home, he had handed his letter of introduction to the wife of the absent merchant. But she paid little attention to his enquiries, as she was herself in a state of great trouble and embarrassment, and the entire household was in confusion.

She soon informed Wilhelm, and indeed the information could not long have been withheld, that her step-daughter had lately eloped with an actor, who had a short time before separated from a strolling company, and had remained behind in the town for the purpose, as it were, of giving instructions in French. The father distracted with sorrow and disappointment, had gone to the police office in order that the fugitives might be pursued and arrested. She scolded her daughter severely, and abused the lover, maintaining that neither of them possessed a single good quality, and she bitterly bewailed the disgrace they had entailed upon her family. Wilhelm felt embarrassed and confounded, he felt that the prophetic spirit of this sybil had as it were by anticipation, condemned and punished his own design. But

he could not help feeling a stronger and more intense interest in the grief of the father, who upon his return from the police office, with settled sorrow and sobbing accents, related to his wife the result of his visit. He could not conceal his distraction and distress of mind. After reading the letter which Wilhelm had presented, he gave directions that the horse therein mentioned, should be delivered to him.

Wilhelm determined to mount his steed immediately, and quit a house in which, under the circumstances we have narrated, it was impossible for him to feel comfortable; but the good host would not allow the son of a friend to whom he was so much indebted, to take his leave without experiencing a more cordial welcome, and without having passed one night at least beneath his roof. He partook, however, of but a melancholy supper, passed a restless night, and at early dawn he was glad to leave a family who by their observations and remarks had not failed, however unintentionally, to wound his feelings most severely.

He rode slowly and thoughtfully along the road, when suddenly he observed a crowd of armed men approaching through the fields. He perceived at once by their attire, by their long loose coats, their wide sleeves, their shapeless hats, and heavy muskets, as well as by their lounging gait and self-satisfied bearing, that they were a detachment of the country militia. They halted presently beneath a large oak tree, and laid down their muskets, taking their seats comfortably upon the grass to smoke a pipe. Wilhelm paused near them, and entered into conversation with a young man, who approached on horseback. He was now obliged to listen again to the history of the two fugitives, with which he was, alas! already too well acquainted, and the account was interspersed with observations not very flattering to the young couple, or to their parents. He learnt at the same time that the police had arrived to take charge of the accused. They had been overtaken in the neighbouring village, and placed in confinement there. Shortly afterwards a vehicle was seen approaching in the distance. It was surrounded by the civic guard, whose appearance was far more ludicrous than terrible. A strange-looking official now rode forward, and having joined the young man with whom Wilhelm had been conversing, they exchanged compliments together, at

the boundary of their respective districts. This was done with great gravity and many strange grimaces, reminding one of the ghost and conjuror, when they perform their fearful midnight incantations, the one within, the other without the limits of an enchanted circle.

The attention of the spectators was in the mean time attracted to the vehicle, and not without sympathy did they behold the poor unhappy culprits, sitting together upon bundles of straw. They looked at each other tenderly, and scarcely seemed to notice the crowd of bystanders. An accident had occasioned them to be conducted from the last village in that disagreeable manner, as the old coach which had been procured for the lady having broken down, she had thereupon begged that she might be permitted to sit beside her friend, who, under the idea that he had been guilty of some capital offence, had been loaded with fetters. His fetters, however, served to enhance the interest which the loving couple excited, especially as the demeanour of the youth was both reserved and dignified, and he frequently kissed the hand of his beloved with the most affectionate respect.

"It is true we are most unfortunate," she exclaimed to the bystanders, "but we are, however, not so guilty as we appear. This is the way in which cruel men reward faithful love, and parents who care but little for the welfare of their children, tear them violently from that happiness and joy which, after many a weary day, they have at length succeeded in attaining."

Whilst the bystanders gave expression to their sympathy in a variety of ways, the officers having completed their formalities, the vehicle moved on, and Wilhelm, who was deeply interested for the fate of the lady, hastened forward along the footpath to introduce himself to the police authorities, before the procession should arrive. But he had scarcely reached the Court-house, which was already in a state of bustle and confusion in consequence of the preparations made to receive the fugitives, before the young clerk overtook him, and by a circumstantial account of the whole proceedings, and afterwards by a particular eulogy upon his own horse, which he had the day before received in barter from a Jew, he completely prevented any further conversation.

The misguided pair had in the mean time been conducted

through a garden which was connected by a private entrance with the Court-house, and in this manner they were introduced to the Court. The lawyer was most cordially complimented by Wilhelm for this display of humanity, although in truth his only motive was to disappoint the people who were assembled round the Court-house, and to deny them the pleasure of seeing a fellow-creature in distress.

The magistrate, who had no especial love for unusual cases of this description, being in the habit of committing all sorts of mistakes, and of being requited for his good intentions with the stern censure of the government, proceeded with much solemnity to his office, whither the clerk, Wilhelm, and some of the more respectable citizens soon followed him.

The lady was first introduced. She came forward with an air wholly devoid of boldness; she was calm and self-possessed, and shewed both by her air and demeanour that she entertained a high opinion of the respect to which she deemed herself entitled. Without being questioned, she commenced to complain with much emotion of the injustice of the situation in which she found herself placed.

The clerk commanded her to be silent, and held his pen over his folded paper. The magistrate assumed a grave look, turned to his clerk, hemmed several times, and then asked the poor girl what was her name and how old she was.

"Pardon me, sir," she replied, "but it does appear singular that you should enquire my name and age, when you know the former so well, and are aware that I am just as old as your eldest son. Any thing that you really wish and require to learn I am ready to explain to you fully.

"Since my father's second marriage I have always felt myself wretched at home. I might have formed several advantageous matrimonial connections, but they were always thwarted by my step-mother, on account of my marriage portion. Having at length become acquainted with young Melina, I felt compelled to love him, and as we foresaw the obstacles which would prevent our union, we determined to seek together in the wide world that happiness which seemed unlikely to await us beneath the paternal roof. I carried nothing away with me that was not my own. We did not fly like thieves or robbers, and my beloved does not deserve to be thus led about, loaded with chains and handcuffs. The

Prince is a just man, and will never sanction such harshness. If we are guilty, we are at least not so to this extent."

The embarrassment of the old magistrate was now more than redoubled. He was about to express his sympathy; and the eloquent address of the girl had quite deranged the plan of his protocol. The mischief became greater, when, notwithstanding repeated peremptory questions, she refused to answer, and alluded with firmness to the statement she had already made.

"I am no culprit," she said. "I have been disgraced by being brought hither, seated upon straw; but there is a higher tribunal that will restore us to honour."

The clerk had in the mean time written down her words, and then whispered to the magistrate that he might proceed, as a regular protocol could be prepared afterwards.

The old magistrate once more took courage and began in the dryest manner, and with the aid of official formulas to enquire into the sweet secrets of love.

The blood rushed into Wilhelm's face, and the cheeks of the pretty culprit were likewise tinged with the charming hues of modesty. She was silent and confused, until her embarrassment at length seemed to invest her with courage,

"Depend upon it," she exclaimed, "I should confess the truth, even were it to my own disadvantage; and should I now hesitate to do so when it reflects honour upon me? Yes, I have considered him as my husband from the first moment when I became certain of his attachment and truth; I have willingly conceded to him all that love demands, and all that a devoted heart is unable to withhold. Do with me what you will. If I hesitated for a moment to make this admission, it was caused solely by a fear that it might prove injurious to my beloved."

Wilhelm, upon hearing this confession, formed an exalted idea of the maiden's sentiments, whilst her judge looked upon her as a good for nothing outcast, and the citizens who stood by, thanked God that such an occurrence had never happened or at least been discovered within the circle of their own families.

Wilhelm's imagination now pictured the possibility of Mariana being brought to a court of justice, and he framed in his mind an eloquent speech in her defence, rendering her

innocence even more affecting, and her confession even more noble, than that to which he just listened. He was seized with the most anxious wish to assist the two lovers. He made no secret of his desire, and privately requested the wavering magistrate to conclude the investigation, insisting that every thing was as clear as possible and needed no farther enquiry.

This suggestion was so far of use that the maiden was permitted to depart; and the young man was now brought forward, after his fetters had been removed at the door. He seemed to consider his position in a more serious point of view. His replies were more precise, and if he on the one hand displayed less heroic generosity, he on the other created a more favourable impression, by the decision and candour of his statement.

When this enquiry was also concluded and was found completely to agree with the preceding one, except that the lover, in order to protect the maiden, obstinately denied what she had already confessed, she was once more brought forward, and thereupon a scene ensued between the parties which completely won for both of them the heart of our friend.

Here in an humble Court of Justice he was actual witness of an exhibition which seldom occurs except in romances and in comedies, the struggle of mutual generosity —the force of love in misfortune.

"Is it then really true," he asked himself, "that timid affection which shrinks from the glare of daylight and of mankind, and only dares to revel in retired solitude and in the deepest secresy, when called forth by some disastrous accident, can display more courage, strength and boldness than the more noisy and ostentatious passions?"

Soon afterwards, to his great delight, the whole affair was concluded. The accused, however, were both detained in custody, but if it had been possible, Wilhelm would have restored the young lady to her parents that same evening. For he had determined to become her protector, and to promote a happy and prosperous marriage between the two lovers.

He requested the magistrate's permission to speak with Melina in private, a favour which was conceded to him without difficulty.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE intercourse of the new acquaintances soon became intimate and cheerful. For when Wilhelm revealed to the dejected youth his connection with the lady's parents, offered to become his intercessor, and spoke of his own hopes of success, he cheered and consoled the sad and anxious spirit of the prisoner. The latter felt himself as it were again at liberty, reconciled with his new relations, and only anxious about his future pursuits and means of support.

"You cannot long remain in trouble upon this point," observed Wilhelm, "since you seem to possess natural qualifications to ensure success in the pursuit which you have chosen. An agreeable figure, a sonorous voice, a sensitive heart! Could any actor enjoy greater advantages? If I can serve you with letters of recommendation, it will give me the greatest satisfaction."

"I thank you, cordially," replied the other, "but I shall scarcely be able to avail myself of them, for, if possible, it is not my intention to resume the stage."

"Then you will do wrong," said Wilhelm after a pause, in which he recovered from his surprise, for he concluded certainly that the actor would return to the theatre as soon as he and his young wife should be restored to liberty. This course seemed to him as necessary and natural as that frogs should love the water. He had not doubted this for a moment, and he now learned the reverse with great astonishment.

"No!" answered the actor, "I have no intention of reappearing on the stage. I would rather adopt a citizen's life, of whatever kind it may be, could I but succeed in obtaining an employment."

"That is a strange determination of which I cannot approve, for without special reasons it is never advisable to change the course of life upon which a person has entered, and besides I know no pursuit which offers so many attractions, and so many delightful prospects as the career of an actor."

"It is easy to perceive that you have never been one," remarked the other.

Wilhelm thereupon observed, "How rarely is any man content with his condition! He pines to be engaged in the pursuit of his neighbour, an occupation from which the latter perhaps is anxious to be disentangled."

"But," replied Melina, "there will never cease to be a difference between bad and worse. Experience not impatience influences my conduct. In the whole world, what pittance is earned with more trouble, uncertainty and labour than that of the actor? It were as well almost to beg from door to door. What endless vexations must he not endure from the jealousy of rivals, the prejudice of directors, and the versatile humour of the public! He must needs in truth wear a bear's skin, and submit to be led about with a chain, and cudgelled, in the company of apes and dancing dogs, and forced to play antics to the sound of a bagpipe, for the amusement of children and a mob."

Wilhelm hereupon indulged in a multitude of reflections to which he would not give utterance in presence of his worthy companion. He adverted to them delicately by a remote and scarcely perceptible allusion. The actor was by this means induced to explain himself more clearly and at greater length. "Is not a manager obliged," he asked, "to sue humbly before the Mayor of every obscure village, for permission to make a little money circulate amongst the inhabitants, for a month or two, between the season of the fairs? Oftentimes have I pitied our own manager, for example, who in some respects is a worthy man, though he has occasionally given me cause for much dissatisfaction. Good actors on the one hand exhaust his funds, whilst on the other, he cannot free himself from the encumbrance of bad ones, and should he attempt to equalize his expenditure with his receipts, the public becomes dissatisfied, the house is empty, and in order to escape utter ruin he must continue his performances subject to pecuniary loss and mental vexation. No, no, Sir! since you profess yourself ready to assist me, I implore you to speak earnestly to the parents of my wife. Let them procure for me here, some little post of clerk or tax-gatherer, and I will consider myself happy."

After a little further conversation, Wilhelm took his leave, promising that he would apply to the parents of the lady early on the following morning and see what could be

effected. As soon as he found himself alone, he relieved his mind by giving utterance to the following exclamations. "Unfortunate Melina, it is not in thy profession, but in thyself that the evil lies which thou can'st not overcome. What being in the world but must find his existence miserable, who without an inward vocation, adopts a trade, an art, or any other pursuit in life! But the man who is born with talents for his duties, finds in the execution his noblest reward. There is nothing on the earth void of difficulty! It needs an inward impulse, a desire, a love for duty, to overcome obstacles, to remove restraints, to elevate us above the limits of a narrow circle within which others fret out their wretched existence. To your mind, the stage is nothing but boards, and the characters you act are a school-boy's task. You look upon the audience, as upon working days they regard each other. You may be content therefore to sit behind a desk, to pore over account books, calculating interest and striking balances. You are a stranger to that all-embracing all-inspiring whole, which is only discovered, understood and perfected by the soul; you do not feel that in man there burns a noble fire, which if not fanned and nourished, becomes buried beneath the ashes of daily wants and indifference, but which can never be wholly extinguished. You feel within you no strength to fan this flame, and your heart has no resources with which to feed the fire when once it is aroused. Hunger impels you, distress wearies you, and you will not learn that every condition in life is beset with foes who can only be subdued by a cheerful and contented heart. You are right to be content within the limits of a common sphere: for what post could you fill which demanded either soul or courage! Endow a soldier, a statesman or a divine with your thoughts and he will complain as justly of the wretchedness of his lot. Have there not in truth been men, so wholly destitute of every feeling which ennobles life, that they have pronounced the very being and nature of man to be a Nothing, a wretched existence no worthier than the dust? If the forms of earnest men were impressed in living characters upon your soul, if the flame of sympathy burned within your breast, if the voice which issues from within were diffused over your whole being, if your tone and the words of your lips were

pleasant to hear, you would feel then that you were sufficient for yourself and you would soon find place and opportunity wherein to be appreciated by others."

Amid such words and reflections, Wilhelm undressed himself, and retired to bed with sentiments of interior satisfaction. A complete romance of his intentions, in place of his worthless pursuits for the morrow, was unfolded in his soul, delightful phantasies led him softly into the domains of sleep, and then handed him over to the sisterhood of dreams, who received him with open arms, and encompassed his reposing head with apparitions of heaven.

In the morning he awoke betimes, and thought over the duty which he had undertaken. He returned to the house of the forsaken parents, where he was received with some astonishment. He suggested his proposal with modesty, and soon found fewer difficulties than he had anticipated. The deed was done, and though persons, particularly strict and severe, sometimes resist the past and unchangeable, and thereby increase an evil, yet a deed once done will produce an irresistible impression on most minds, and an apparent impossibility when once performed takes its place with other things of course. It was therefore easily arranged that Melina should marry the daughter, but that on account of her misconduct she should receive no fortune, and should undertake to leave the legacy of her aunt for a few years longer in her father's hands at a low rate of interest. The second point, relating to an appointment for the husband, presented greater difficulties. It was not desirable that the imprudent maiden should be constantly near them, or that the connection of a strolling player with so respectable a family, who counted a superintendent amongst its numbers, should be continually recalled to their minds by his presence, and they entertained very little hope that the government would provide him with an appointment. Both parents opposed such a course, and even Wilhelm who pleaded very zealously in his behalf, because he objected that a man whom he despised should return to the stage, and was sure that he was unworthy of so great an honour, could not succeed with all his arguments. If he had known the secret motives of opposition, he would have avoided the ask of attempting to influence the parents. For the father, who would joyfully

have preserved the society of his daughter, hated the young man, because his wife had taken a fancy to him, and she could not endure the thought of witnessing in her step-daughter the success of a fortunate rival. And for these reasons, against his will, in the company of his young wife, who had already evinced a great desire to see the world, and to be admired, Melina was compelled to take his leave in a few days, and to seek for an engagement with a company of actors.

CHAPTER XV.

Happy years of youth! happy time of first and earliest love! Man is then like a boy, who for hours can be delighted with an echo, who can sustain unaided the whole burden of conversation, and is abundantly satisfied if the unseen spirit with whom he converses repeats but the final sounds of the words which he has uttered.

Such was Wilhelm's condition in the earlier, and more especially in the later, period of his love for Mariana, he had endowed her with the whole wealth of his own emotions, and considered himself as a very pauper who subsisted on her charity. And as a landscape derives its greatest or indeed its entire charm from the brilliancy of the sunshine, so in his eyes was everything beautified, and embellished by the relation which it bore to her.

How often in order to gaze on her, had he taken his post behind the scenes of the theatre, a privilege for which he had entreated the permission of the manager! Truly the magic of perspective had then disappeared, but the more powerful magic of love had already commenced its work. He would stand for hours beside the dingy footlights, breathing the vapour of the lamps, gazing upon his beloved; and when upon her return, she looked kindly upon him, he became lost in delight, and though surrounded by mere laths and scenic frame-work, he thought himself in Paradise. The sorry scenery, the wretched flocks and herds, the tin waterfalls, the pasteboard rose-trees, and the one-sided thatched cabins excited in his mind charming poetic visions of ancient pastoral times. Even the ballet dancers, who, upon close

inspection, were ordinary mortals enough, were not repulsive to him when he beheld them on the same stage with the beloved of his soul. So certain is it that love which lends enchantment to rose bowers, myrtle groves and moonlight, can also impart an appearance of animated nature to fragments of wood, and to cuttings of paper. And thus a strong seasoning can lend a flavour to insipid and unpalateable fare.

A seasoning of this kind was in truth necessary that Wilhelm might tolerate the condition in which he usually found both Mariana's apartment and herself.

Brought up in the house of a refined citizen, order and cleanliness were essential elements of his existence, and having inherited a share of his father's love of finery, he had been accustomed from his earliest years, gorgeously to furnish his own chamber, which he had always considered as his little kingdom. The curtains of his bed were suspended in thick folds, and fastened with tassels such as are used to ornament thrones. A carpet adorned the centre of his room and one of a finer quality was placed before his table, and he had so arranged his books and various ornaments that a Dutch painter might have taken good sketches therefrom for drawings of still-life. His dress was a white cap, which stood erect like a turban upon his head, and he had caused the arms of his dressing gown to be slashed in the oriental fashion. In justification of this peculiarity, he asserted that long wide sleeves were an impediment to writing. In the evening when he was alone and no longer apprehended interruption, he usually wore a silk scarf round his body, and he is said to have frequently fixed in his girdle, a dagger which he had taken from an old armoury, and thus to have studied and rehearsed his tragic characters, and in the same garb kneeling upon the carpet, to have repeated his prayers.

How happy in those days did he consider the actors whom he beheld in the possession of such varied and costly wardrobes, accoutrements and arms, and skilled in the unvarying practice of a stately bearing, whose spirit seemed to present a mirror of all that was noble and glorious, according to the opinions and passions of mankind And thus did Wilhelm form his estimate of an actor's private life; he looked upon it as a succession of exalted pursuits and employments of which the appearance on the boards was the

culminating point, just as silver which has been long agitated in the crucible, assumes at length a bright and beautiful hue to the eye of the workman, proving that the metal has been finally purified from all impure dross.

He was therefore amazed at first when he found himself in the presence of his love, and looked down through the cloud of bliss by which he was surrounded, upon the tables, chairs and floor. The fragments of her temporary ornaments, light and false, lay around, like the shining scales of a skinned fish, mixed together in confusion and disorder. Articles appropriated to personal cleanliness, combs, soap and towels were no more concealed than the evidences of their use. Music, play-books and shoes, washes and italian flowers, needle cases, hair-pins, rouge-pots and ribbons, books and straw-hats, in no wise ashamed of their proximity to each other, were confounded in an element common alike to all, powder and dust. But as Wilhelm, in her company, thought little of any other object, and as every thing which belonged to her, or which she had touched, was hallowed in his eyes, he found at length in this confused system of housekeeping, a charm which he had never experienced in the neat arrangements of his economy. When at one time he put away her boddice that he might approach the piano, and at another, placed her gown upon the bed, that he might provide himself with a chair, and when upon other occasions objects met his eye which are more usually concealed, he felt as if in all this, he were every moment approaching nearer to her, and as if the union between them were being cemented by an invisible bond.

But he could not so easily reconcile with his earlier impressions, the conduct of the other actors, whom he sometimes met, when he first visited at her house. Busy with idleness, they appeared to think but little of their calling or profession. He never heard them discuss the poetic merits of a play, or pronounce an opinion upon their value or worthlessness; the only question was, "How much would it bring? Is it a stock-piece? How long will it last? How often may it be performed?" with other inquiries and observations of the same nature. Then they commonly discussed the character of the manager, commenting upon his parsimony, the lowness of his salaries, and his injustice

towards particular individuals. They then turned to the public, observing that the latter seldom rewarded the most meritorious actor with their approbation, that the national theatre was daily improving, that the professional actor was gradually rising in public esteem according to his true merits, and that he never could be esteemed and honoured enough. They also discoursed much of coffee houses and wine gardens, and of the occurrences there; how much debt one of their comrades had contracted, and what deduction from his pay he must consequently endure; of the inequality of their weekly salaries; and of the cabals of some rival company; then, finally, they would again consider the great and deserved attention of the public towards themselves, not forgetting the influence which the theatre was calculated to exercise upon the country and upon the world at large.

All these things which had formerly cost Wilhelm many a weary hour, thronged again upon his memory, as his steed bore him slowly homewards, and as he revolved in his mind the various incidents which had occurred upon his journey. He had himself actually witnessed the commotion which the elopement of a young maiden can occasion, not only in the family of a respectable citizen, but even in an entire village. The scenes upon the high road, and at the police office, the sentiments of Melina, and all the various circumstances which had happened, appeared again before him and excited in his keen and anxious mind so much inquietude, that he could bear it no longer, but giving spurs to his horse, he hastened towards the city.

But by this course he only encountered new vexations. Werner his friend and intended brother-in-law was waiting for him, in order to commence a serious, important and unexpected conversation.

Werner was one of those tried individuals of firm principles whom we usually designate cold beings, because they are not quickly or visibly excited by the occurrences of life. His intercourse with Wilhelm was one never-ending dispute, which only served however to strengthen their affection, for in spite of discordant dispositions, each derived advantage from his intercourse with the other. Werner was satisfied that he was able to restrain with bit and bridle the superior but somewhat extravagant spirit of Wilhelm, and the latter

frequently won a splendid triumph when he succeeded in carrying his companion with him in his moments of enthusiasm. Thus each found mental exercise in the company of the other, they were accustomed to meet daily, and it might well have been said that their anxiety to converse together was heightened by their utter impossibility to comprehend each other. But in reality as they were both worthy men, they associated together because they had one common end in view, and neither could ever understand why he could not convert his friend to his own peculiar views.

Werner observed that Wilhelm's visits had for some time back been less frequent, also, that in his favourite subjects of conversation, he had become short and inattentive, and that he had ceased to engage in vivid accounts of his own peculiar impressions, things which afford an unmistakeable evidence of a mind, finding repose and satisfaction in the society of a friend. The precise and thoughtful Werner endeavoured first to examine his own conduct for the origin of the fault which he had observed; but certain rumours soon set him on the right track, rumours in fact which some imprudences of Wilhelm soon reduced to certainty. He had commenced an inquiry, and learned, that he had for some time past openly visited an actress, that he had conversed with her upon the stage, and had actually accompanied her to her house. He became inconsolable when he was made aware of their nightly meetings, for he understood that Mariana was a seductive girl, who was in all probability extracting money from his friend, whilst she herself was supported by another dissipated lover.

When his suspicions had almost attained certainty, he determined to speak to Wilhelm upon the subject, and had already arranged his plan for the purpose, when the latter returned, disappointed and dejected from his journey.

Werner that same evening stated to him all that he had learnt, first in a calm tone, and then with the serious earnestness of well-intentioned friendship. He left no topic unexplained, and allowed his friend a full taste of all the bitterness which cold-hearted men can with virtuous malice so abundantly dispense to persons in love. But he effected little, as one may easily imagine. Wilhelm answered with deep emotion, but with perfect self-composure,—"You do

not know the girl. Appearances are, perhaps, against her; but I am as confident of her faith and virtue as I am of my own love."

Werner adhered to his accusations, and proposed to adduce proofs and witnesses. Wilhelm rejected them, and parted from his friend in a spirit of discontent and sorrow, resembling a man whose decayed but firmly fixed tooth has been seized, and vainly pulled at by some unskilful dentist.

Wilhelm was beyond measure distressed that the image of Mariana had been darkened, and almost defaced in his imagination, first, by the fancies which he had indulged upon his journey, and then by the unfriendliness of Werner. He therefore adopted the most certain means of restoring it in all its pristine purity and beauty, for that very night he hastened along the well-known pathway to find shelter in Mariana's arms. She received him with transports of joy, for as she had seen him pass her house on his way into town, she expected him at nightfall, and we may easily suppose, that every doubt was soon effaced from his heart. In truth her tenderness unlocked all his confidence, and he related to her how excessively, not only the public, but even his friend had sinned against her.

Some cheerful conversation led them to advert to the first season of their acquaintance, a recurrence to which topic never fails to form one of the most delightful entertainments of two lovers. The first steps which have introduced us to the labyrinth of love are so pleasant, the first views so captivating, that we always retain them in our memory with delight. Each claims an advantage over the other: each one first felt the pangs of devoted love, and in this contest each would rather appear to be the vanquished than the victor.

Wilhelm repeated to Mariana, once more what she had so often heard on the stage, that she had soon succeeded in attracting his attention from the performance to herself, that her figure, her acting and her voice had so completely captivated him, that at length he only attended those plays in which she performed, that he had often gone behind the scenes, and had stood near her unobserved: and then he spoke with delight of that happy evening upon which he had found an opportunity to render her a service, and to engage her in conversation.

But Mariana denied that she had left him so long un-

noticed, she assured him she had often watched him on the promenade, and in evidence thereof she described the dress which he had worn upon those occasions; she assured him that he had attracted her even then more than any other person, and that she had long ardently desired his acquaintance.

How joyfully did Wilhelm believe it all! How easily was he persuaded, that when he approached she had felt herself drawn towards him by an irresistible charm, that she had joined him intentionally behind the scenes in order that she might see him nearer and have an opportunity of making his acquaintance, and that at length, when his reserve and bashfulness could not be overcome, she had herself found an opportunity, and compelled him to hand her a glass of lemonade.

The hours passed rapidly away in this endearing contest, for they pursued it through every little circumstance of their romantic attachment, and Wilhelm at length left his beloved, with his tranquillity fully restored, and with the firm resolution of putting his plan in execution without delay.

CHAPTER XVI.

His father and mother had made the arrangements necessary for his journey, but certain trifling preparations which were still required for his outfit, delayed his departure for a few days. Wilhelm availed himself of this time to write a letter to Mariana, with a view of bringing to a decision the business upon which she had hitherto avoided communicating with him. The letter was in these terms.

"In the sweet obscurity of night, which has so often sheltered me in thine arms, I sit and think and write to thee, and all my thoughts and feelings are wholly thine. O, Mariana! I who am the happiest of mortals feel like a bridegroom who stands within the festive chamber, contemplating the new world which will soon open before him, and during the sacred ceremony imagines himself, in deep transport, to stand before the mysterious curtain, from whence the rapture of love whispers out to him.

"I have persuaded myself not to see thee for a few days,

and I have found satisfaction for this privation in the hope of soon being for ever with thee, of remaining entirely thine. Shall I repeat my wishes? Yes, I feel I must, for it seems as if hitherto thou hadst never understood me.

"How often in that low voice of affection which, whilst it desires to possess all, ventures to utter but little, have I searched in thy heart to discover thy wish for a lasting union. Thou hast certainly understood me. For the same desire must have ripened in thine own heart, and thou must have comprehended me in that kiss, in the balmy peacefulness of that happy evening. I learnt then to value thy modesty, and how did such a feeling increase my love! When another woman would have acted with artifice, in order to ripen by unnecessary sunshine the resolution of her lover's heart, to induce a proposal and secure a promise, you drew back, silenced the half expressed intentions of your lover, and sought by an apparent indifference to conceal your real feelings! What a being must I have been had I failed to recognize in such tokens, that pure and disinterested affection, which cares only for its object. Trust to me and be calm! We belong to each other, and by living for each other, we shall neither of us forsake or lose any thing.

"Accept then this hand. With solemnity I offer this unnecessary pledge. We have already experienced all the delights of love, but there is new bliss in the thought of duration. Do not make inquiries—cast aside care—fortune protects love; and the more certainly, as love is easily contented.

"My heart has long since abandoned my paternal dwelling. It belongs to thee as truly as my spirit lives upon the stage. Fate allows no other man so to attain his every wish. Sleep abandons my eyes, and like the glow of an ever new Aurora, thy love and thy happiness rise up perpetually before me.

"Scarcely can I prevent myself from rushing to thy side, and constraining thy consent to our union, and commencing on the morrow's dawn my career in the world. But no, I will restrain myself. I will not adopt an ill-advised rash and foolish course, my measures are taken and I will execute them calmly.

"I am acquainted with the manager Serlo. The journey

I contemplate will lead me directly to him. For a whole year he has wished that his company of actors possessed some portion of my animation and enthusiasm for the stage. Doubtless he will receive me well. More reasons than one forbid that I should join thy company, and Serlo's theatre is so far from hence, that I shall be able at first to conceal my project. I shall thus find sufficient to support me at once. I shall make general inquiries, become acquainted with the actors, and return for thee.

"Thou seest, Mariana, what I compel myself to do, in order, certainly, to obtain thee. Since it can afford me no pleasure to be so long separated from thee, and to know that thou art alone. But when I once more recal thy love, which to me is every thing, if thou wilt concede my prayer before we part, and give me thy hand in the eye of heaven, I can go in peace. Between us it can be but a form, but then a form so sweet—the blessing of heaven joined to the blessing of earth! It can be celebrated sweetly and expeditiously in the Prince's neighbouring chapel.

"I have money sufficient to begin with. Let us divide it. It will suffice for both; before it is expended heaven will assist us further.

"Dearest love, I have no apprehension. So joyful a commencement must end happily. I have never doubted that any man who is earnest can succeed in the world; and I feel confidence enough to win a sufficient maintenance for two persons, or for more if necessary. It is often said that the world is ungrateful—for my part I have never yet known it to be thankless when one has discovered the proper mode of rendering it a service. My whole soul is fired at the thought that I shall at last be able to address the hearts of men in a strain which they have long been anxious to hear. A thousand times have I been utterly distressed in my inmost soul, keenly sensitive as I am for the honour of the stage, when I have witnessed the performance of some deluded being, who has fancied himself competent to stir the hearts of men with words of power. The very tone of a pipe is more musical and nobler to the ear. It is incredible what profanity men in their utter ignorance can commit.

"The theatre has often warred with the pulpit. They should not, I think, be at strife. How ardently I wish, that

in both, the honour of nature and of God were celebrated by none but noble men. These are not dreams, my love. As thy heart tells me that thou dost love.—I seize the brilliant thought, and I affirm—no, I do not affirm, but I hope and trust, that we shall appear to mankind as a pair of noble spirits, to open their hearts, to move their natures, to present them with heavenly enjoyments, as sure as those joys were heavenly which I have experienced when reclining upon thy bosom, because they withdrew us from ourselves, and exalted us above ourselves.

"I cannot conclude. I have already said too much, and yet I know not whether I have as yet exhausted all that concerns you, for no words can express the tumult which rages in my bosom.

"But accept this letter, my love, I have read and re-read it, and find that I ought to have begun it differently—and yet it contains all that is needful for thee to know, what must be my course before I can return to thy bosom in the rapture of delicious love. I feel like a prisoner who is secretly engaged in filing off his chains within his dungeon. To my unconscious sleeping parents, I bid good night. Farewell, dearest, farewell! At length I conclude. My eyes have closed repeatedly—it is already far in the night."

CHAPTER XVII.

The day seemed long, while Wilhelm, with his letter carefully folded in his pocket, felt consumed with anxiety to visit Mariana, and it was scarcely dark when, contrary to his custom, he proceeded stealthily to her dwelling. He had intended to announce himself for the night, and then to leave her for a short time, but he had resolved before his departure, to place his letter in her hand, and upon his return at midnight, either to obtain her answer and her consent, or to force it from her by the warmth of his caresses. He flew to her arms, and as he pressed himself to her bosom, could scarcely contain himself for joy. The ardour of his own emotions concealed from him at first that she did not receive

him with her accustomed cheerfulness, but as she could not long hide her painful embarrassment, so she pleaded a slight indisposition in excuse. She complained of headache, and would not consent to his proposal to return again at midnight. He suspected no evil, and ceased to insist, but he felt that this was not the moment to deliver his letter. He kept it, therefore, and as her repeated uneasiness, and remarks politely suggested the propriety of his departure, in the tumult of insatiable love he seized one of her handkerchiefs, thrust it into his pocket, and reluctantly quitted her embraces and her house. He returned home, but was unable to remain there long, whereupon he dressed himself, and once more went into the air.

After wandering up and down several streets, a stranger accosted him, who inquired the way to a certain hotel. Wilhelm offered to show him the house. The stranger asked the name of the street, and the names of the persons who occupied several large mansions which they passed, and criticised the nature of certain police regulations of the town. They thus became engaged in a highly interesting conversation, when they finally reached the door of the hotel. The stranger compelled his guide to enter to drink a glass of punch; he then communicated his own name, and the name of his native town; he also stated the nature of the business which had brought him hither, and requested a similar mark of confidence from Wilhelm. The latter at once mentioned his name, and his place of abode.

"Are you then a relation of that Meister who once possessed a splendid collection of works of art?" inquired the stranger.

"Yes, I am," replied the other. "I was ten years old at the decease of my grandfather, and it grieved me exceedingly to be obliged to witness the sale of so many beautiful objects."

"But your father realized a large sum of money by them."

"You know all about it then?"

"O yes; I visited those treasures whilst they were yet in your house. Your grandfather was not only a collector, but a person well acquainted with art. In his earlier happier years he had been in Italy, and had brought back many treasures with him from that country, which money cannot

now procure. He was the owner of some splendid pictures by the best masters. Inspecting his drawings, you could scarcely have believed your eyes. Amongst his collection of marbles were several matchless fragments, he had a set of bronzes instructive and select, his coins were illustrative of art and history, and his few gems were entitled to the highest praise. His whole collection was well arranged, although the rooms and apartments of the old house were not symmetrically built."

"You may imagine how much we children lost when all those treasures were taken down and packed up for removal. It was the first sorrowful moment of my existence. I cannot describe how empty the chambers appeared as we witnessed the several objects disappear one after another, which had delighted us from our childhood, and which we had considered as secure as the house or even as the town itself."

"If I am not mistaken, your father placed the produce of the sale in the hands of a neighbour with whom he commenced a sort of partnership in business."

"Quite right, and their joint speculations succeeded admirably. Within the last twelve years they have largely increased their fortune, and are on that account all the more devoted to business. Old Werner too has a son far more inclined towards such a pursuit than I am."

"I am sorry indeed that this neighbourhood has lost such a treasure as your grandfather's cabinet. I saw it shortly before it was disposed of, and I believe I may say that I was the cause of the sale which took place. A rich nobleman who was a great amateur, but who in so important a matter did not rely upon his own unaided judgment, sent me hither and solicited my advice. During six days I inspected the cabinet, and on the seventh, I advised my friend to pay the sum demanded without hesitation. You, who were at that time a lively youth, frequently accompanied me, you explained to me the subjects of the paintings, and were able to give a good account of the whole cabinet."

"I remember such a person, but I should not have recognize him in you."

"It is to be sure a long time ago, and we all change more or less with time. If I remember well, there was a favourite

picture of yours in the collection, from which you would scarcely permit me to look away."

"Quite right, it represented the story of the king's son, who pined for love of his father's wife."

"It was not by any means the best picture either in composition, in tone of colour, or in treatment."

"Of those qualities I am no judge. I do not understand them. It is the subject which charms me in a picture, not the painter's art."

"Your grandfather was of a different opinion in such matters, for the greater part of his collection consisted of admirable pieces in which one could not help admiring the execution of the artist, let the subjects have been what they might. This identical picture hung in the outermost chamber, a sign that he placed but little value upon it."

"Yes, it was in that spot where we children were always permitted to play, and where this picture made an indelible impression upon me, which not even your criticism, highly as I respect it, would be able to efface, if we only now stood before it. How I pity a youth who is compelled to bury in his bosom the sweet impulse, the blessed inheritance which nature has imparted to him, and who must conceal within himself that fire which should warm and animate others, so that he consumes away under unspeakable pain! How I pity the unfortunate maiden who is compelled to devote herself to another, when her heart has already found an object worthy of her true and pure affection!"

"But in truth these feelings are very unlike the emotions by which a lover of art is accustomed to investigate the works of great painters, and probably had the cabinet continued to be the property of your family, a taste for such performances would have sprung up within you, and you would have learnt to consider some other object than yourself and your individual fancies, in estimating works of art."

"Indeed the sale of that cabinet afflicted me exceedingly, and I have often missed it since, in my more mature years, but when I recollect that the loss was indispensable to the unfolding of a talent within me, which will affect my career more strongly than those inanimate pictures could have done, I feel contented and reverence fate, who knows so well how to accomplish what is good for me and for others."

"It grieves me again to hear that word fate uttered by a youth who is now at the very age when men usually ascribe their ungovernable propensities to the determination of the higher powers."

"Then do you not believe in fate? Is there no power which rules over us and converts every thing to our good?"

"The question here is not of my faith, nor is this the place to unfold how I have sought to form an idea of things which are incomprehensible to us all—the question here is only how we may consider them to our greatest advantage? The web of life is woven of necessity and chance. Man's reason stands between them and governs both, treating necessity as the foundation of its being and at the same time guiding the operation of chance to its own advantage, for man only deserves to be called a god of this earth, as long as in the exercise of his reason he stands firm and immoveable. Woe then to him who has been accustomed from youth to confound necessity with arbitrary will, and to ascribe to chance a sort of reason, which it seems a kind of religious duty to obey! What is this but to renounce our own judgment and to allow unopposed sway to our inclinations. We deceive ourselves with the belief that it is an act of piety to pursue our course without reflection, to submit to the guidance of agreeable accidents, and finally to dignify the result of such a fluctuating life with the appellation of a heavenly guidance."

"Have you never been in a position where some trifling occurrence has caused you to adopt a certain line of conduct, where some accident has happened to you, and a train of unlooked-for events has finally led to a result which you yourself could scarcely have foreseen? Should not this inspire a confidence in fate, a trust in some such destiny?"

"With such opinions as these no maiden could preserve her virtue, and no man could keep his money in his purse, since there are opportunities enough for getting rid of both. That mortal alone is worthy of esteem, who knows what is advantageous to himself and to others, and who labours to conquer his own self-will. Every man is master of his own happiness, as the artist is of the raw material which he would mould into a certain form. But the art of attaining hap-

piness resembles all other arts, the capacity alone is born within us,—it needs to be cultivated, and practised with the greatest care."

These and other subjects were discussed between them till at length they separated, without appearing to have precisely convinced each other, but they appointed a place of meeting for the following day.

Wilhelm continued to pursue his course through several streets. At length he heard the sweet echoes of clarionets, of horns, and of bassoons, and his heart beat joyously within him. The sounds proceeded from some travelling musicians, who were playing several delicious airs with admirable taste. He addressed them, and for a small sum of money they agreed to accompany him to Mariana's house. A clump of tall trees ornamented the open space before her dwelling, and under these he placed his serenaders. He himself reclined upon a seat at some distance, and abandoned himself to the influence of the soothing melody, which filled the air in the cool and balmy night. Stretched at length beneath the lovely stars, his whole existence resembled a golden dream. "And she listens to these sweet sounds," he said within his heart, "and she knows whose remembrance of her, whose love, it is that makes the night thus musical, even in absence we are united by these sweet strains, as in every separation we are joined together by the delicious concord of love. Two loving hearts resemble two magnetic needles, the same influence which sways the one directs the other also, for it is only one power which works in both, one feeling that actuates them: clasped in her embrace then can I conceive the possibility of ever being disunited from her? and yet I must leave her, to seek a sanctuary for our love where she may be for ever mine. How often has it happened to me during our absence, when my thoughts have been fixed upon her, that I have touched a book, a dress, or some other object, of hers, it seemed as if I had touched her hand, so completely have I been lost in the apprehension of her presence. And to remember those moments of rapture which have recoiled alike from the light of day, and from the eye of the cold spectator, for the joyful remembrance of which the gods themselves would be content to abandon their happy state of pure felicity, as if the recollection could renew the delight of that cup of joy,

which carries our senses beyond this earth, and wraps our souls in the purest bliss of heaven. And her form—" He became lost in contemplation, his peace was converted into longing—he leaned against a tree, and cooled his warm cheek against the bark, whilst the eager night wind wafted away the breath which issued in sighs from the depths of his pure bosom. He sought for the handkerchief which he had taken from her—his search was in vain—he had forgotten it. His lips were parched, and his whole frame trembled with desire.

The music ceased; and it seemed as if he had suddenly descended from the lofty regions to which his emotion had exalted him. His agitation increased as the feelings of his heart were no longer supported and refreshed by the sounds of soothing melody. He took his seat upon the threshold, and became once more tranquil. He kissed the brass knocker of the door, he kissed the entrance over which her feet passed daily, and he warmed it with the pressure of his bosom. Then he sat silent once more for a short time, and his fancy pictured her behind her curtains, attired in the white night-dress with the rose-coloured ribbon encircling her head, and he imagined himself so near to her, that he thought she must be dreaming of him. His thoughts were lovely like the spirits of the evening, peace and desire arose alternately within him, love ran its tremulous hand in a thousand varying moods over all the chords of his soul, and it seemed as if the music of the spheres remained silent above him, to listen to the soft melody of his heart.

If he had had his master-key about him, with which he was accustomed to open Mariana's door, he could not have restrained himself, but would have entered the temple of love. But he retired slowly, and with dreamy steps he turned in among the trees, his object was to proceed homewards and yet he paused and looked round repeatedly. At length having summoned up resolution, he proceeded forwards, but on reaching the corner of the street, he turned round once more, when it appeared to him as if Mariana's door opened and a dark figure issued from the house. He was too far off to see distinctly, and before he had time to collect himself and to observe accurately, the figure disappeared in the darkness, but he thought he saw it once more passing before a white house. He stood still and looked eagerly, but before

he could determine to pursue the phantom, it had vanished. Through what street had the man gone, if he were a man?

As a person whose path has been suddenly illuminated by a flash of lightning, immediately afterwards seeks in vain with dazzled eyes to find in the succeeding darkness those forms which had accompanied him and the connection of the road—so all seemed obscure to the vision and to the heart of Wilhelm. And as a midnight spirit which at first creates unspeakable alarm, in the calm moments which succeed, is considered only as the child of fear, and the wild apparition creates endless doubt within the soul, in the same manner was Wilhelm overpowered with agitation and suspense as leaning against a pillar he paid but little heed to the dawning of the morning or the crowing of the cocks, until the early tradespeople began to stir and dismissed him home.

On his way he succeeded in effacing from his imagination his strange illusion by the most satisfactory reasons, but that sweet harmonious stillness of the night, to which he now looked back as to an unreal vision, had also fled. To ease his heart and to impress a seal upon his returning faith in Mariana, he now drew her handkerchief from the pocket of his coat. The rustling of a note which fell, caused him to withdraw the handkerchief from his lips—he opened the note and read:

"By the love I feel for thee, little simpleton, what was the matter last night? I will come to thee this evening. I can well suppose thou art sorry to leave this place, but have patience, I will come for thee before the fair. But listen, do not wear that dark coloured dress any more, it makes thee look like the witch of Endor. Did I not send thee the charming white night gown, that I might enfold a snowy lambkin in my arms? Always send your notes by the old Sybil. The devil himself has chosen her for our Iris."

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

The man who struggles earnestly for the success of any enterprise in which he may have embarked, be its object good or evil, cannot fail to enlist our warmest sympathies in his favour, but when the end is once attained, our interest in the matter wholly ceases—the finished and the complete can no longer fix our attention, and this will more especially be the case, if we ourselves should ever have foretold an evil issue to the undertaking.

We shall not therefore entertain our readers with a detailed narrative of the grief and distress which our unhappy friend, endured upon the unexpected frustration of all his fondest hopes and wishes. Indeed we may pass over several subsequent years of his life, and resume our narrative upon beholding him once more happily employed. But we must first advert to a few incidents indispensable for the connexion of our story.

A pestilence or malignant fever ever rages with great violence in a healthy and vigorous frame, and for this reason when Wilhelm was unexpectedly overtaken by deep misfortune, all his energies were completely prostrated. As when by accident a collection of fireworks ignites in the preparation, and the tubes which, loaded and filled with powder, would if discharged in the manner intended by the artist, have presented a beautiful succession of brilliant devices, but now hiss and explode, spreading tumult and danger around, so in Wilhelm's bosom did happiness and hope, delight and joy, realities and delusion all mingle together in ruinous confusion. In such moments of desolation, the friend who has hastened to bring relief becomes actually paralyzed, and the sufferer himself may consider it a blessing if his senses forsake him.

Days of unmingled agony succeeded, days of agony still returning and intentionally renewed; for sorrow such as we are describing is ever hailed as a boon from the hand of nature. Wilhelm at such times felt as if he had not wholly lost his beloved; his grief was now one incessant struggle to retain possession of that happiness which was fast departing from his soul, and he found rapture in the belief that its retention was still possible, in the hope that he might yet secure a brief restoration of those joys which were about to abandon him for ever. And thus a body cannot be considered wholly dead, so long as the work of decay is still proceeding, so long as those powers, which seek vainly to execute their original functions, exhaust themselves in destroying the frame which they once animated, and not until all has become mouldered down, and the whole is mingled together in a mass of indifferent dust, does the sad and vacant feeling of death arise within us, a consciousness of life extinct, which can only be restored by the breath of Him who lives for ever.

And in a disposition so fresh, so uncorrupted, and so genial as Wilhelm's, there was no lack of materials upon which destruction, ruin and death might expend themselves, and the quickly healing power of youth lent additional food and strength to the influence of grief. The blow had struck to the very roots of his existence. But Werner, who was now necessarily his confidant, attacked the monster passion of his friend with all his vigour, and sought to pierce into its inmost life. The opportunity was favourable; evidence of the past could easily be procured, and histories and examples of a similar kind were abundant enough. He pursued his course, step by step, with such cool determination, that he did not leave his friend the comfort of the slightest momentary delusion. He destroyed every retreat in which he might have found refuge from despair, so that in the end nature, unwilling to see her favourite wholly perish, visited him with illness, and thus afforded him a species of relief.

A violent attack of fever with its usual accompaniments, medicines, excitement and weariness, together with the untiring attentions of his friends and the love of his own family, a blessing which we first learn properly to value in

moments of affliction and want afforded him new materials for thought and provided him with a species of melancholy entertainment; but not until his health had improved, that is, not until his strength was exhausted, did Wilhelm look with dismay into the dark abyss of his direful misery, as one looks down into the gloomy crater of an extinct volcano.

He did not cease to reproach himself bitterly that he was able after so sad a loss to enjoy a single tranquil or indifferent moment. He despised his own heart and longed for the consolation of grief and tears.

In order therefore to awaken these feelings again, he reverted in memory to all the scenes of his by-gone happiness. He painted a picture of his past bliss in glowing colours, upon which he feasted his imagination, and when he had attained the highest pitch to which his fancy could soar, when the sunlight of former days seemed to animate his limbs and to warm his bosom, he would look back into the terrible abyss which was before him, he would feast his eyes with a view of the appalling chasm, plunge into its depths and wring from nature the most bitter sufferings. Thus did he torment himself with unceasing cruelty. And youth which is so rich in latent powers knows not what it wastes, when to the anguish of a single loss, it adds so many woes of its own creation, as if it sought now for the first time to give a real value to joys which can never be restored. And Wilhelm felt so convinced that his loss was the first, the last, the greatest he could ever experience, that he spurned all consolation which promised that his sorrow could ever be assuaged.

CHAPTER II.

Accustomed thus to torment himself, he now subjected to the most relentless criticism those pursuits which next to love and in conjunction with it, had ever afforded him the sweetest consolation and hope, viz. his talents as a poet and an actor. But he could henceforth detect in his compositions nothing better than a spiritless imitation of antiquated copies; devoid of real merit he considered them as mere

pedantic boyish exercises, utterly destitute of every spark of natural feeling, of truth and inspiration. In his poems he saw only a monotonous succession of words in which the most common-place thoughts and emotions were joined together by wretched rhymes; and thus he destroyed every hope, every prospect of finding happiness in such pursuits.

His skill as an actor was next criticised and condemned with similar severity. He blamed himself for not having earlier discovered the complete vanity of his pretensions. His figure, his gait, his actions, and his declamation were all in turn reviewed, and he abandoned unequivocally every claim to excellence or to merit which might have distinguished him from ordinary actors, and by this means added immeasurably to his own silent despair. If it be a difficult task to renounce a woman's love, it is no less bitter to forsake the society of the muses, to acknowledge ourselves for ever unworthy of their company, and to forfeit that sweetest and most delicious approbation, which is publicly bestowed upon the appearance, the action, and declamation of a performer.

Thus did Wilhelm commence to learn the practice of resignation, and from that moment he dedicated his abilities with the greatest zeal to the pursuits of trade. To the astonishment of his friend, and to the supreme satisfaction of his father, no person could now be more attentive than Wilhelm at the office, or to the transaction of business upon change, or in the warehouse, and he manifested the most exemplary diligence and punctuality in his care of the correspondence and accounts. It is true that his course was not marked by that cheerful activity which to the industrious man ever brings its own reward, when he pursues with regularity and perseverance the occupation to which he has been born; his career was followed in silent obedience to the voice of duty, founded it is true upon the best principles, supported by conviction and rewarded by self approbation, a result however, which even when conscience crowns our exertions with approval, is frequently attained at a cost of a stifled sigh. In this manner did Wilhelm for a time persist in active life, supported by the conviction that his severe trial had been appointed by fate for his benefit. He was glad to have received a timely though

somewhat severe lesson on the advantage of embarking early in a proper course, knowing that many others have to expiate with late and bitter repentance the mistakes of youthful inexperience. For men usually delay as long as possible, to renounce the follies which they worship, as well as to confess any capital error they may have committed, and are slow to acknowledge a truth which may lead them to despair.

But resolved as he was to abandon all his beloved pursuits, some time was still necessary to convince him fully of his misfortune. At length, however, by irresistible arguments, he so completely annihilated every prospect of indulging dreams of future love, of poetical composition and theatrical representation, that he determined to destroy every trace of his former folly and what ever could in any way restore it to his recollection. For this purpose one evening he lighted a fire in his apartment, and brought forth a little box of relics in which a thousand trifles had been preserved, which in eventful moments, he had either received or stolen from Mariana. Every withered flower which met his eye, reminded him of the happy time when it bloomed fresh and bright within her hair, every note recalled once more the happy meeting to which he had been invited, and each ribbon brought back the memony of that sweet resting place, where his head had so often tranquilly reposed—her beautiful bosom. How could he help feeling all those blissful emotions, which he had long ago considered dead, revive again within his breast? Was it not inevitable that the passion which in the absence of his mistress he had subdued, should burst into new life in the presence of these records of affection? We first remember the dreary gloom of a dark and cloudy day, when some solitary sunbeam pierces through and enlivens us with the joyous brightness of a cheerful hour.

Not wholly without emotion did Wilhelm witness these treasures which he had so long considered sacred, successively disappear in smoke and flame. More than once indeed he felt a shudder of remorse at his work of destruction, and a pearl necklace and an embroidered handkerchief still remained uninjured when he suddenly determined to feed the decaying fire with the poetical inspirations of his youth.

Until that hour he had from the earliest development of his mind carefully preserved every production of his pen. His writings still lay packed together at the bottom of the chest in which they had been placed, when he had projected his elopement. How different were the feelings with which he now viewed these records of bygone days, from the sensations he had experienced when he gathered them together.

When after the lapse of a considerable time we chance to open a letter, which under certain circumstances may have been written and sealed, but not reaching the friend to whom it was addressed, has been returned to us again, we experience a strange sensation upon breaking our own seal and holding communion with our altered self as with a third person. Such a feeling strongly seized our friend as he opened the first packet which came to his hands and flung their scattered sheets into the flames. They were brightly blazing at the moment when Werner suddenly entered. He expressed his surprise at Wilhelm's employment, and asked what had occurred.

"I am affording a proof," said Wilhelm, "of my earnestness in abandoning a pursuit for which I was not born," and so saying he consigned a second packet to the flames. Werner endeavoured to prevent him, but it was too late.

"I do not understand why you proceed to this extremity," observed Werner. "Why should these performances be destroyed, even if they are not excellent?"

"Because a poem should either be excellent, or should not exist," replied the other; "because every man who is incompetent to produce the best, should wholly abstain from art, and carefully avoid all its temptations. There exists in every man a certain unaccountable desire to imitate the objects which he sees, but this desire is far from proving that he possesses the capacity for succeeding in what he may undertake. Observe the conduct of boys, for example, after a company of rope dancers has visited a town, how they amuse themselves in walking backwards and forward, and balancing on every plank and beam that comes in their way, until some new attraction arises and leads them to another folly. Have your never observed this even within the circle of your own acquaintance? When we have been delighted with the performance of an amateur, do we

not find many persons anxious to learn the instrument upon which he has excelled? What countless mistakes are thus committed! Happy the man who early learns the immeasurable distance between his wishes and his powers!"

Werner was of a different opinion: the contest now grew warm, and Wilhelm could not but experience a strange sensation in employing against his friend the very same arguments with which he had so often vexed himself. Werner maintained that it was unreasonable wholly to abandon a pursuit for which a man possessed some taste and talent, on the ground that he could not attain to full perfection therein. There were many idle hours, he observed, which could be thus profitably employed, and by and by a result might be obtained not wholly profitless to one's self and others.

Wilhelm, who entertained a different opinion, interrupted Werner, and observed with much warmth:

"How completely you mistake in supposing that any work whose first presentation is intended to fill the whole soul, can be executed in broken hours, or in fragments of time snatched from other pursuits. No, the poet must live wholly within himself, wholly absorbed in his own beloved employment. He, whose mind is enriched by heaven with precious treasures, who carries in his bosom a wealth perpetually increasing, must abide with his riches, insensible to every outward influence, and pass his existence in the joy of that calm blessedness which the affluent cannot purchase with all their accumulated stores. Behold mankind! How eager are they in the chase after happiness and pleasure! Their wishes, their content, their gold are all sacrified in the pursuit. And what is their aim? The attainment of an end, which the poet has inherited from nature, the enjoyment of the world, a sympathy with others, an harmonious conjunction of many things which are seldom found in unison.

"And whence arises the universal discontent of mankind but from their inability to make the actual correspond with their ideal, from learning that happiness still evades their grasp, from finding that the wished-for comes too late, and that objects fondly desired, fail, when attained, to gladden the heart as distant hope had promised. Fate has exalted the poet above all these ills, as if he were a god. Calmly

from his eminence he surveys the raging tumult of the passions, contemplates the fate of families and kingdoms which are tossed in fruitless agitation, marks those inexplicable enigmas of misunderstanding, which a monosyllable would explain, and yet are allowed to occasion unspeakable distress and confusion. In the sad and joyous destiny of every human being he feels an earnest sympathy, and whilst the man of the world is wasting his days in listless melancholy for some great bereavement, or is advancing in glad triumph to meet his happy fate, the susceptible and inspired soul of the poet goes forth like the all-transforming sun from darkness into light, whilst with soft melody he tunes his harp to alternate strains of joy or woe. From the inmost depths of his heart springs up the beauteous flower of wisdom, and whilst other mortals are sunk in mid-day dreams, which torture the senses with monster delusions, he lives through the dream of life like one awake, and the most overwhelming event becomes to him a portion of the past and of the future. And thus the poet is at once a teacher, a prophet, and the friend of gods and men. Would you have him descend from his elevation to follow some degrading pursuit? He who borne aloft upon the pinions of a bird is privileged to soar above the world, to nestle on the loftiest summits, and lightly flitting from bough to bough, to feed on fruits and flowers, must he labour like an ox at the plough, submit to be harnassed like a dog, perchance secured with a chain to protect a farmyard by his barking?"

Werner, as may be conceived, had listened with astonishment. "This were all just," he observed, "if men were only formed like birds, and could pass their cheerful day in continual enjoyment, without the necessity of labour, and if at the approach of winter they could betake themselves to distant regions, escape the evils of want, and avoid the severity of the season."

"Poets have lived so in times of old," exclaimed Wilhelm, "when true nobility was more highly honoured, and so should they ever continue to live. Plentifully provided for from within, they needed but little from without—the faculty of imparting high thoughts and glorious images to mankind in sweet tones and melodious numbers which entwined themselves inseparably with every theme, enchanted the world in

days of old, and served the poet for a rich inheritance. In the palaces of kings, at the banquets of the rich, before the threshold of the lover, the bard was ever welcome when ear and soul were closed to all beside, and men heard their songs in silent rapture as we stand enchanted with delight at the delicious strain of the nightingale, which resounds with overpowering sweetness from the traversed glen. Every dwelling offered them a home, and they felt exalted by the very humbleness of their lot. The hero thrilled at their lay, and the victor of the world paid homage to the poet, for he felt that without the poet's aid, his own vast existence would pass by like the whirlwind, and leave no trace behind. The lover sighed to feel his own anxieties and joys as varied and harmonious, as they were painted by the inspired lips of the bard, and even the rich failed to see in their dearest treasures, that value which they borrowed from the glowing splendour of the poet's imagination which felt and ennobled all their worth. Who but poets, in fine, created gods, exalted us to them, and brought them down to us?"

"My friend," replied Werner, after a little reflection, "I have often lamented that you should seek to divest yourself so completely of those feelings of enthusiasm which are natural to you. If I am not much mistaken, it would be better for you to indulge your inclinations than to harass yourself by wholly renouncing the enjoyment of them, and to allow yourself one innocent gratification even at the expense of every other pleasure."

"Dare I acknowledge it," answered the other, "and will you not think me ridiculous if I confess that let me fly whither I may, these fantasies ever pursue me, and that when I examine my heart, I find all my youthful aspirations rooted there, even more firmly than before? What remains then for me, unfortunate? Who could have foretold that the arms of my spirit with which I had hoped to seize something great, and perhaps to grasp infinity, would so soon be shattered? whoever should have foretold such a result would have driven me to despair. And even when judgment has been passed upon me—when I have for ever lost her, who like a divinity was to have conducted me to the attainment of every wish, what remains for me but to abandon myself to the most desolating sorrow? O, my brother," he continued, "I will

not conceal it from you, in my secret designs, she was the support to which the ladder of my hopes was fixed. Behold! with daring intent the adventurer hovers in the air, but the support fails, the iron breaks, and he himself lies shattered with his wishes in the dust. I will not," he exclaimed as he sprang from his seat, "leave one of the wretched papers in existence." He then seized another package, tore it to pieces, and flung it into the flames. Werner sought to prevent him, but in vain. "Leave me!" he cried, "of what use can they be—these miserable papers? To me they are destitute of comfort and of happy remembrances. Shall they remain to afflict me to the end of my existence? Shall they survive to provoke one day the derision of mankind, in place of exciting their sympathy and awe? Alas for me and for my destiny! Now at length I can understand the complaints of poets—of the wretched whom grief has rendered wise. How long have I considered myself irresistible, invulnerable, and now, alas! I see to my cost that a deep and early sorrow can never be assuaged, can never be healed. I feel that it must go with me to the grave. Upon no day of my life shall this sorrow be unfelt, till at length it bring me to my end—and *her* image shall remain with me—shall live and die with me—the memory of the worthless one—and yet, my friend, if I dare utter the sentiments of my heart—she was not wholly worthless. Her situation and her fate have a thousand times excused her in my eyes. I have been too harsh. You have schooled me in your own heartlessness. You have restrained my wavering intentions, and prevented me from performing what was due to us both. Who knows to what condition I may have reduced her? and my conscience now perpetually upbraids me, with having abandoned her to destitution and despair. Might she not have justified herself? Is it not possible? How many mistakes have deluded the world, how many extenuating circumstances may excuse even the greatest fault? How often does my fancy picture her, sitting in silence, leaning on her arm, and exclaiming 'This is fidelity—this is the love he swore to me! With such a cruel stroke, to end the sweet existence which made us one!'" He burst into a flood of grief, leaned his face against the table, and saturated the papers which remained with bitter tears.

Werner stood by in the greatest perplexity. He had not expected this sudden out-burst of grief. He tried several times to engage his friend in conversation, to direct his thoughts to other topics, but in vain. He could not resist the current. And here did well-tried friendship once more resume her office. He permitted the first violent shock of grief to pass away, whilst he by his silent presence afforded proof of his own pure and honest sympathy, and so they passed the evening together. Wilhelm absorbed in the silent remembrance of by-gone sorrow, and Werner astonished at this new out-burst of a passion which he believed that his own good advice and zealous expostulations had long since mastered and subdued.

CHAPTER III.

After relapses of this nature Wilhelm was accustomed to pursue his business, and to resume his life of activity with greater zeal, and he found this habit the best means of escaping the labyrinth which threatened to entangle him. His gracious manner of receiving strangers, and his facility for corresponding in all living languages, increased the hopes of his father, and of his friends for his commercial success, and consoled them during his sickness, as they were wholly unacquainted with the cause of his illness, by which their projects had been interrupted. They soon determined that Wilhelm should undertake a second journey, and accordingly we now find him once more on horseback, with his saddle bags behind him, exhilarated by the motion and fresh air, and approaching a mountainous district where he had some commissions to execute.

With a sensation of the greatest delight he pursued his way over hill and dale. Impending rocks and rushing streams, moss-covered ruins and deep precipices now met his eye for the first time, and yet his earliest youthful dreams had often carried him to scenes like these. He felt the days of his former years return, every sorrow which he had

endured vanished from his soul, and with real delight he recited aloud passages from different poems, particularly from the "Pastor Fido," which, in these solitary places crowded upon his memory. He also called to mind many passages of his own composition, which he repeated with especial satisfaction. He peopled the world which lay before him with all the forms of the past, and every advance into the future seemed to him full of promise, both of important transactions, and of remarkable events.

A crowd of people who followed greeted him successively as they passed, and hastily pursued their journey along a steep footpath which led across the mountain. Though they interrupted his silent musings, they did not attract his attention very forcibly, until at length a talkative companion joined him, and related the cause of this unusual cavalcade.

"In Hochdorf," he observed, "there is a comedy to be performed this evening, at which the whole neighbourhood will be present."

"How," exclaimed Wilhelm, "has the muse of comedy found a way to build herself a temple in these solitary mountains, in these impassable woods? Then I must also make a pilgrimage to her festival."

"You will be still more surprised," added the stranger, "when you learn by whom the piece will be performed. There is a large manufactory in the place which affords employment to many people. The proprietor who lives, so to speak, at a distance from all human society, knows no better way of amusing his workmen in winter, than by inducing them to act plays. He forbids all gambling amongst them, and wishes to wean them from coarse habits. They therefore pass the long evenings in this manner, and as this is the birth-day of the proprietor, they are about to give a special entertainment in his honour." Wilhelm proceeded to Hochdorf, where he had intended to pass the night, and dismounted at the factory, the proprietor of which by the way appeared as a debtor upon his list.

Upon mentioning his name, the old man exclaimed with astonishment, "Ha! sir, are you the son of that worthy man to whom I owe so many thanks, and am even indebted in a sum of money? Your father has had great patience with me, and I should indeed be a knave were I not to

discharge my debt quickly and cheerfully. You come at a proper time to test my sincerity."

He called his wife, who was in like manner delighted to see the youth. She assured him that he resembled his father, and regretted that the arrival of so many strangers would prevent her from offering him a bed.

The account was simple, and soon settled. Wilhelm put the gold into his pocket, and wished that the rest of his business might be as easily transacted.

The hour fixed for the performance now arrived. They only waited the appearance of the Head Forester, who at length came, accompanied by several sportsmen, and was received with the greatest respect.

The company was conducted to the theatre which had been constructed in a barn situated near the garden. The body of the theatre as well as the stage had been prettily and neatly arranged, but without any great display of taste. A painter who worked at the manufactory had formerly been assistant at the Prince's theatre, and had in a somewhat bold, though rude style produced a representation of woods, streets, and apartments. They had borrowed the plot of the piece from a strolling company, and had arranged it after a style of their own. As far as it went it was amusing. The intrigue of two lovers to carry off a girl from her guardian, and afterwards from each other afforded room for several interesting situations. It was the first piece which Wilhelm had for a long time witnessed, and it caused him to indulge in many reflections. It was full of action, but without any touch of true character. But it gave pleasure and delight. Such are the beginnings of all theatrical art. The mere man is content if he only sees something represented, the educated man requires to feel, but the refined spectator derives the greatest pleasure from reflection.

Wilhelm felt now and then as if he would willingly have assisted the actors, and indeed a trifling suggestion or two would have produced a great improvement.

But the tobacco smoke, which gradually became more and more dense, disturbed his silent cogitations. The Head Forester had lighted his pipe soon after the commencement of the piece, and some others of the audience soon took a similar liberty. The large dogs of the above mentioned

gentleman, moreover, played a disagreeable part. They had been locked-up at the commencement of the performance, but they soon found their way to the back entrance, ran upon the stage, jumped amongst the actors, and finally by a leap over the orchestra succeeded in joining their master who had taken his place in the front row of the parterre.

The afterpiece consisted of an operatic performance. A portrait which represented the old proprietor in his bridal costume stood upon an altar decorated with flowers. All the actors in turn saluted him with respectful reverence as they passed. The youngest child then stepped forward, attired in white, and recited a poetical composition, at which the whole family, and even the Head Forester, who thought of his own children, melted into tears. The play being now ended, Wilhelm could not resist venturing upon the stage, in order to take a nearer view of the actresses, to praise their performances, and to offer then a little advice for the future.

The remainder of our friend's business which he had to transact in the other larger and smaller mountain villages was not so happily and agreeably executed. Many debtors requested further credit, some were rude, and others denied Wilhelm's claim. According to his instructions he was obliged to sue some of them, and he was therefore compelled to seek out an advocate, to furnish him with instructions, to appear in a court of justice, and to discharge several other similar unpleasant duties.

He was equally unfortunate in other particulars. Some persons seemed disposed to pay him a little attention, but he found few who were capable of giving him any useful information, and still fewer with whom he could hope to carry on a profitable business. In addition to this, unfortunately the rainy weather now set in, and a journey on horseback in those districts was for this reason attended with insuperable difficulties. He thanked heaven, therefore, when he once more came to the level country, and found himself at the foot of the mountains, in a beautiful and productive plain, where a sweet little country town lay in the sunshine on the banks of a softly murmuring river. Here without any business to execute, he resolved to pass a couple of days in order to refresh both himself and his horse, which had suffered considerably from the badness of the roads.

CHAPTER IV.

Upon entering an hotel in the market place, he found the whole establishment very merry, or at least very cheerful. A large company of rope dancers, vaulters and tumblers, accompanied by a giant, had just arrived with their wives and children, and their preparations for a public exhibition had created a general confusion. At one moment they were quarrelling with their host, and at the next with each other, and if their contention was intolerable, their expressions of satisfaction were far more so. Undetermined whether he should go or remain, Wilhelm stood before the door, and observed some workmen, who were busily engaged in the task of erecting a stage in the public square.

A girl who was carrying a quantity of roses and other flowers offered him her basket, whereupon he purchased a beautiful nosegay which he surveyed with pleasure, and then commenced to arrange after his own fashion. Suddenly he heard a window open in an hotel on the opposite side of the square, at which a handsome young lady presented herself. Notwithstanding the distance between them he could perceive that a pleasant expression of cheerfulness animated her countenance. Her fine hair fell carelessly over her shoulders, and she seemed to be engaged in surveying him attentively. Presently a boy dressed in a white jacket, and wearing a hair-dresser's apron, issued from the door of the house, and when he came up to Wilhelm saluted him, and informed him, "the lady at the window wishes to ask whether he would share his beautiful bouquet with her." "The whole of it is at her service," replied Wilhelm, handing the flowers at the same time to the little messenger, and bowing to the lady, who returned the civility with a gracious salute, and immediately retired from the window.

With thoughts bent upon this strange adventure, he was ascending the stairs to his room, when a young creature brushed hastily past him, and attracted his attention. The child was prettily attired in a short silk waistcoat with slashed

Spanish sleeves, and long tight trowsers ornamented with puffs. His long black hair was arranged in curls, and secured with bands about his head. Wilhelm beheld the figure with astonishment, and was unable to say whether it were a boy or a girl. Deciding finally upon the latter, he took her up in his arms as she passed close to him, bade her good day, and inquired to whom she belonged, although he knew that she must be a member of the singing and dancing company.

She surveyed him with a sharp dark side-glance, and making her escape she rushed into the kitchen, without making any reply to his inquiry.

Upon reaching the top of the stairs he found the large apartment occupied by two men who were practising fencing, or endeavouring rather to prove their skill upon each other. One of them evidently belonged to the company then in the house, but the other had a less common appearance. Wilhelm looked on, and found reason to admire them both, and when shortly afterwards the dark-haired muscular combatant retired, the other with much politeness offered Wilhelm a foil.

"If you wish to receive a pupil for instruction, I am willing," observed the latter, "to venture a few passes." They thereupon fenced together. The stranger was far superior to his antagonist, but he was polite enough to keep observing, that "everything depended upon practice." Wilhelm however afforded substantial proof that he had been formerly instructed by a good and practical German fencing-master.

Their amusement was interrupted by the uproar which the motley company made as they issued from the hotel, to notify to the town the nature of their intended performance, and to excite their curiosity with regard to the spectacle itself. A drummer took the lead, he was followed by the manager on horseback, behind him rode one of the dancing girls on a similar steed, holding a child before her, who was attractively arrayed in ribbons and spangles. Next came the rest of the company on foot, some bearing children upon their shoulders in fantastic postures, yet gracefully and easily balanced, and amongst them was the young, black-haired dark complexioned figure which had previously attracted Wilhelm's attention.

The clown now ran merrily about among the crowding multitude, and distributed his hand-bills with very intelligible jokes, at one time kissing a maiden, then playfully striking one of the boys, and awakening in the minds of the by-standers an unconquerable wish to see him nearer.

Upon the printed play-bills the multifarious accomplishments of the company were conspicuously emblazoned, but particularly those of one Monsieur Narcisse and Mademoiselle Landrinette, both of whom being principal characters had the prudence not to appear in the procession, in order thus to win more respect, and to excite a greater degree of curiosity.

Wilhelm's fair companion had appeared again at the window during the procession, and he had not neglected to make inquiries about her from his new companion. This latter personage, whom for the present we shall call Laertes, offered to introduce Wilhelm to her. "I and the young lady," he remarked with a smile, "are two wrecks of a company of players, that broke up here a short time ago. The charm of the spot has tempted us to pass some days in it, that we may spend in peace our small store of money, whilst another of our party has set forth to find employment for himself and us."

Laertes therefore accompanied his new acquaintance to the door of Philina's apartment, where he allowed Wilhelm to remain for a few moments whilst he himself ran to a neighbouring shop to procure some sweetmeats. "I know you will thank me," he observed on his return, "for procuring you this pleasant acquaintance."

The lady now advanced from her apartment to receive them, wearing a pair of light small slippers with high heels. She had thrown a black mantilla over a white "negligée," and though the latter was not of the most dazzling whiteness, it gave her a more easy and familiar air, whilst her short petticoats displayed the prettiest little foot in the world.

"You are welcome," she exclaimed, addressing Wilhelm, "and I beg you will accept my thanks for your beautiful flowers." With one hand she conducted him into her apartment, whilst with the other she pressed the bouquet to her bosom. When they were seated and engaged in a train of indifferent conversation, to which she knew how to impart

an attractive charm, Laertes flung a handful of burnt almonds into her lap, which she immediately began to eat. "Sir, what a child this young man is," she cried, "he would wish to persuade you that I am fond of sweetmeats, while it is he himself who cannot live without such things."

"Let us admit," replied Laertes, "that in this point, as well as in many others, we perfectly agree. For instance," he continued, "this is a delightful day, I think we might take an excursion into the country, and dine together at the mill." "Willingly," replied Philina; "we must provide a little entertainment for our new acquaintance." Laertes rushed from the apartment, for he never walked quietly, and Wilhelm expressed a desire to return home for a short time, in order to arrange his hair, which had been disordered by the journey. "You can do that here," observed Philina, and calling her attendant, she induced Wilhelm in the most persuasive manner to lay aside his coat, to put on her dressing gown, and to permit his hair to be curled in her presence. "We must not lose time," she said; "who knows how long we shall be together."

The servant, more sulky and unwilling than unskilful, paid but little attention to his task; he hurt Wilhelm and committed many blunders. Philina rebuked him several times for his conduct, and at length pushing him away impatiently, she turned him out of doors. She now undertook to perform the duty herself, and commenced curling the hair of our friend with great skill and dexterity, though she did not seem to be in any great hurry to bring her task to a conclusion, finding more than once that several matters required to be re-arranged. Now and then as it were by mistake she touched his knee with hers, and brought her nosegay and her bosom so near to his lips that he was strongly tempted more than once to imprint a kiss upon them.

When Wilhelm had arranged his forehead with the little powder knife, she desired him to put it in his pocket as a token of remembrance. It was a pretty trifle. The handle formed of inlaid steel was engraved with these words, "Think of me." Wilhelm put it away, thanked her, and requested permission to offer her a little present in return.

Everything was now ready. Laertes had driven round in the carriage, and they set out upon a very delightful excursion.

Philina distributed alms to every beggar who asked her, and always accompanied her gift with some friendly and cheerful observation.

They had scarcely arrived at the mill and ordered dinner, when they heard a strain of music. It proceeded from a band of miners who were singing some sweet ballads, and accompanying their happy, shrill voices with a triangle and a harp. This did not continue long before a crowd of people collected round them, and the company at the windows expressed their approbation of the performance. The players acknowledged this attention by enlarging their circle, and preparing to play their best piece. After a short pause a miner appeared carrying a spade, and whilst his companions performed a solemn air, he began to represent in pantomime the action of digging.

Before long another peasant stepped out from the crowd, and by his gestures gave the former to understand that he must retire. The company were surprised at this interference, and did not understand that this peasant was a miner in disguise, until he opened his mouth and in a species of recitative scolded the other for daring to meddle with his field. The miner, however, was not alarmed, but set about informing the peasant that he had a right to dig there, and gave him some elementary ideas of mineralogy. The peasant, who did not understand the technical language of his instructor, asked all manner of ridiculous questions, at which the spectators who were better informed laughed heartily. The miner sought still to instruct the inquirer, and to explain the advantage which would eventually arise to him by exploring the subterraneous treasures of the earth. The peasant who at first had threatened him with blows became gradually tranquillized, and they parted good friends, but the miner came out of the contest with the greater honour.

Wilhelm remarked, when they were all seated at table, "We have in this little dialogue the most convincing proof how useful the theatre might be made to all classes, how great an advantage the state might derive from it if the actions, pursuits and employments of mankind were represented in a good and praiseworthy point of view, shewing that they are worthy of honour and protection from the state.

At present we only portray mankind in a ridiculous aspect —the comic poet resembles a malicious taxgatherer, who continually keeps a watchful eye upon the faults of his fellow citizens, and seems delighted when he can convict them. Would it not be a pleasing and worthy employment for a statesman to mark the natural and reciprocal influence of all classes of society upon each other, and to assist a poet who should possess talent enough for the performance of his task. I am convinced that in this manner many interesting and at the same time useful and entertaining pieces might be produced."

"So far as I have been able to observe," said Laertes, "in places where I have travelled, the general rule seems to be to hinder, to forbid, and to pervert, but seldom to invite, to induce and to reward. Every thing is allowed to proceed in the world until it becomes injurious, then for the first time angry and coercive measures are introduced."

"Let us cease to speak of the state and statesmen," said Philina; "I can only think of the latter dressed in peruques; and peruques, whoever wears them, always affect my fingers with a spasmodic feeling. I could tear them from the heads of the venerable gentlemen, dance round the room, and laugh at the bald pates."

Philina cut short her remarks with a merry air which she sang prettily, and gave directions that they should drive speedily homeward in order not to miss the performances of the rope dancers in the evening. Whimsical even to extravagance, she continued her generosity to the poor on her way back, and when she had at length expended her own money and that of her travelling companions, she bestowed her straw hat upon a young girl, and gave away her neckkerchief to an old woman in charity.

Philina invited both her companions into her apartment, because she said they could see the entertainment better from her windows than from the hotel.

Upon their arrival they found the stage erected, and the background ornamented with suspended tapestry. The swings were already prepared, the slack rope was fastened to the posts, and the tight rope was drawn over the trestles. The square was well filled with people, and the windows with spectators of the better class.

The clown in the first place prepared the people for attention and good humour by the display of some drollery, at which the spectators are accustomed to laugh. Some children whose bodies were distorted into various shapes, excited pity and surprise, and Wilhelm could not restrain his feelings of deep commiseration, on beholding the child whose first appearance had awakened his interest, go through her astonishing performance with some difficulty. But the activity of the tumblers soon delighted the spectators, when first singly and then in rows, and subsequently all together, they pitched their sommersaults backwards and forwards in the air. A loud clapping of hands and general applause resounded through the whole assembly.

But their attention was soon directed to another object. The children in succession ascended the rope, beginning with the pupils, that their practising might lengthen the performance and display the difficulties of the art. Some men and some young women also next shewed considerable skill, but Monsieur Narcisse and Mademoiselle Landrinette had not yet made their appearance. At length they came forth from a kind of tent formed of red expanded curtains, and by their agreeable figures and glittering dress, they quickly raised and satisfied the hopes of the spectators. He was a smiling youth of middle size, with black eyes and curly hair; she was a person of not less attractive form, whilst as they appeared in turn upon the rope, and displayed their easy active motions, they surprised the spectators with their strange but graceful attitudes. Her activity and his fearlessness, together with the precision which both exhibited in executing their performances, increased the general delight at each successive leap and spring which they made. Their assumed dignity, and the apparent respect paid to them by the rest of the company, gave them the air of king and queen of the performance, and in the eyes of all they seemed fully worthy of the honour.

The enthusiasm of the crowd soon reached the spectators who were assembled at the windows. The ladies looked intently at Narcisse, whilst the gentlemen admired Landrinette. The lower orders cheered loudly, and even the more polite spectators could not refrain from clapping their hands, but no one condescended to bestow even a passing smile

upon the clown. It was observed that many of the bystanders slunk stealthily away when some of the actors pressed through the crowd with their tin plates to gather contributions.

"They seem to have succeeded," observed Wilhelm to Philina, who was leaning beside him at the window; "I admire the judgment with which they have managed their humble performances, and the skill with which, from the inexperience of the children, and the talents of the other actors, they have produced a whole which has not only fixed our attention, but afforded us most agreeable entertainment."

The crowd had now gradually dispersed, and the square had become once more empty, while Philina and Laertes continued to criticise the forms and skill of Narcisse and Landrinette, and to jest and contradict each other alternately. Wilhelm in the mean time having observed the clever little child standing near some children who were playing in the street, pointed her out to Philina, who instantly called and beckoned to her in her usual lively manner, but without effect, whereupon she ran down stairs humming a song, and brought her up.

"Here is your little wonder," she exclaimed, as she led the little thing into the room. But the child stood still, as if she wished to make her escape, then placing her right hand upon her breast, and her left upon her forehead, she bowed deeply. "Do not fear, my little love," said Wilhelm advancing towards her. She surveyed him with an uncertain look, and then approached a few steps nearer.

"What is your name?" he asked. "They call me Mignon," was the reply. "How old are you?" "No one has ever counted my years." "Who was your father?" "The great devil is dead."

"That is passing strange!" exclaimed Philina. He made some further inquiries. The child answered in a sort of broken German, and with a solemn tone, always placing her hand upon her breast and forehead and at the same time bowing deeply.

Wilhelm could not withdraw his eyes from her. His eyes and his heart were irresistibly attracted by the mysterious fate of this being. She seemed to be about twelve or

thirteen years of age, her figure was good, though her limbs promised to be large, or perhaps foretold a somewhat stunted growth. Her face was not regular, but impressive, her brow was mysterious, her nose extremely beautiful, and the shape of her mouth, indicated much good nature and was very charming, though perhaps too closely compressed for her age, and moreover, the child was accustomed to distort her lips, in a disagreeable manner. It was difficult to discern the hue of her complexion through the rouge upon her cheeks. Her whole appearance made a deep impression upon Wilhelm. He fixed his eyes intently upon her, became silently absorbed in contemplation, and seemed to forget the present in the intensity of his thoughts. Philina, however, soon roused him from his dream by offering the remainder of the sweetmeats to the child and signifying that she might go. The little thing bowed again as she had done at the commencement and darted like lightning from the room.

The moment now approached when our new friends were to separate for the evening, and they accordingly proposed another excursion for the following day. It was resolved, however, to vary the scene of entertainment and to dine at a hunting lodge in the neighbourhood. Wilhelm during the evening expressed many observations in Philina's praise, to which Laertes replied in a short and careless manner.

On the following morning having again fenced for an hour, they visited Philina's hotel together, as they had previously observed the carriage which had been engaged for the day's excursion taking its way in that direction. But what was Wilhelm's astonishment upon his arrival, to find that the carriage and Philina had both disappeared. Upon inquiry, he learned that she had stepped into the vehicle, accompanied by two strangers who had arrived that very morning and they had all set out together. Wilhelm, who had promised himself great enjoyment in her society, could not conceal his vexation. But Laertes laughed and exclaimed, "I love this humour. It is so like her. But let us go to the hunting lodge—she may do as she pleases, but we must not lose our intended excursion, on her account."

Wilhelm proceeded to remark upon this inconsistency of conduct, but Laertes observed, "I do not call a person

inconsistent who remains true to his character. When she proposes or promises any thing, it is always under the implied condition that it must be convenient to herself to execute her intention or to keep her promise. She is generous, it is true, but one must always be prepared to restore her presents."

"She seems a strange character," said Wilhelm.

"Far from strange," he replied, "and she is no hypocrite. I like her for that. I love her because she is so true a specimen of the sex, which I have so much reason to hate. She is a genuine Eve, the original mother of womankind, and so are they all, only they will not all confess it."

With much conversation of this description, in which Laertes very decidedly expressed his aversion to the sex, without however alleging any reason for the feeling, they arrived upon the confines of the forest. Wilhelm was very much out of humour, because the remarks of Laertes had brought vividly to his recollection all the circumstances of his attachment to Mariana. Beneath some lofty old trees, which overshadowed a stone table near a clear fountain they found Philina sitting alone. She was singing a merry song, and when Laertes inquired for her companions, she exclaimed, "O! I have taken them in finely and have enjoyed a rare laugh at them, as they deserved. On the road hither I put their generosity to the test, and finding that they were a stingy pair, I determined to punish them. Upon our arrival at the hotel, they inquired of the waiter what was to be had for dinner? He with characteristic volubility recounted all that was in the house and much more that was not. I marked their confusion; they looked at each other, stammered and inquired the price. 'O! why all this thinking,' I observed, 'the table is the lady's province, leave that to me.' I forthwith ordered an unconscionable dinner, including many things for which it would be necessary to dispatch a messenger to the town. The waiter, of whom by means of a wink or two, I had made a confidant, helped me through, and we so tortured them with the phantom of a splendid feast, that in short they have resolved to take a walk through the forest, from which I think it more than doubtful if they ever return. I have laughed for the last quarter of an hour alone, and I shall

never cease to do so when I think of their looks of amazement." During dinner Laertes recounted several anecdotes of a similar kind, and all told merry stories of practical jokes and laughable impositions.

A youth of their acquaintance from the town now approached them through the wood with a book in his hand. He took his seat near them and began to praise the romantic beauty of the scenery. He spoke of the murmuring brooks, of the waving boughs, of the varied lights and shadows and of the melody of the birds. Philina immediately sang a song about the cuckoo of which the gentleman did not seem quite to approve, and he forthwith took his leave.

"I never wish to hear another rhapsody about nature and her beauties," cried Philina, as soon as the stranger had disappeared, "nothing is more intolerable than to hear an arithmetical account of the pleasures which we enjoy. We walk when it is fine, as we dance when we hear a tune. But why should we think either of the music or the weather? It is the dancer that interests us, not the violin, and a pair of light blue eyes will ever give inspiration to a pair of black ones. But what do we want with books and fountains and old decayed linden trees?" As she spoke she looked at Wilhelm who was sitting opposite to her, with an expression which he could not resist until it pierced to his very heart.

"You are right," he answered, with some hesitation, "man is the most interesting subject of inquiry to man, and nothing else perhaps should interest him. Every thing else that surrounds us, is either the element in which we live, or the instrument which we use. In proportion as we consider these things, observe them and become impressed with them, the weaker will be our sense of self importance and our feeling for society. Persons who set an inordinate value upon gardens, houses, apparel, ornaments, or any other treasure, become less companionable and pleasing, they lose sight of mankind, whom it is the fortune of very few to attract and entertain. May we not remark this upon the stage? A good actor makes us instantly forget defective and inappropriate scenery, while the very splendour of theatrical decoration makes us keenly feel the want of good actors."

After dinner, Philina, took her seat in the shade, among the long grass. Both her friends were busily employed in

collecting for her quantities of flowers. She formed them into a wreath and placed it on her head—she looked unspeakably lovely. There were sufficient flowers for another wreath, so she wove a second whilst the youths remained seated beside her. As soon as it was finished amid repeated jests and merriment she presssd it upon Wilhelm's head with the most charming grace, and then altered its position repeatedly until at length it seemed properly adjusted. "And so, I, it appears, must go away empty," observed Laertes.

"By no means," Philina answered, "you shall have no reason to complain." Saying which she took her own wreath from her head, and crowned Laertes with it.

"If we were rivals," said the latter, "it might now be a question which of us has been more highly favoured."

"Then you would be silly indeed," she answered, and bending towards him with these words, she offered him her lips to kiss, and immediately turning towards Wilhelm, she threw her arms about his neck and kissed him tenderly. "Which tastes the best?" she inquired archly.

"Wonderful," said Laertes, "it seems as if nothing had ever a taste so bitter."

"As little bitter," answered Philina, "as any other gift that one enjoys without envy or self conceit. But I should like now to dance for an hour, and then we must return home in time to see the rope dancers once more."

They returned to the house, when finding music provided, Philina who was an accomplished dancer entertained her two companions. Wilhelm was not unskilful, but he failed in grace, from want of practice. His two friends undertook to give him instruction.

They lingered long. The rope dancers had already commenced their performances. A crowd of spectators had already collected in the square, and our friends upon descending from their carriage, were attracted by a disturbance from the crowd which had collected round the door of the hotel in which Wilhelm had taken up his quarters. Wilhelm ran across to see what was the matter, and when he had forced his way through the crowd, saw with indignation the chief of the rope dancers' company endeavouring to drag the interesting child we have spoken of from the

house by the hair of her head, and cruelly beating her with the handle of a whip.

He rushed like lightning upon the man and seized him by the throat. "Leave the child," he exclaimed with a voice of fury, "or one of us shall never quit this spot." He grasped his antagonist at the same time with a force which rage alone can give. The fellow half choked released the child and prepared to defend himself against his new foe. Some of the by-standers who had pitied the child, without daring to enter into a contest on her account, seized the rope-dancer's arms, deprived him of the whip, and loaded him with abuse. The latter, who was now reduced to the defensive weapon of his tongue, threatened and cursed fearfully: "The idle worthless creature," he exclaimed, "refused to do her duty—she refused to perform the egg-dance, which he had promised to the public,—he would beat her to death and no person should prevent him." He tried to escape, in order to seek the child who had crept away amongst the crowd. Wilhelm held him back, exclaiming, "You shall neither touch nor see the child till you have confessed from whom you have stolen her. I will follow you to the utmost extremity—you shall not escape me." This threat which Wilhelm uttered in the mere heat of passion, without thought or design, perhaps from inspiration, brought the furious fellow instantly to his senses. He replied, "What do I want with the worthless thing? pay me what her clothes have cost, and you may keep her willingly—we can conclude the bargain this very evening." He then departed to finish his interrupted performances, and to appease the dissatisfaction of the multitude, by some astonishing display of his powers.

Wilhelm, as soon as all was quiet, endeavoured to find the child, but in vain. Some said she was concealed in a garret, or on the roof of some of the neighbouring houses, but after a diligent search, they were forced to rest content, and wait until she should come back of her own accord. Narcisse had meanwhile returned, and Wilhelm questioned him about the circumstances and previous history of the child. He however knew but little, as he had not been long with the company, but he related his own adventures with much garrulous levity. When Wilhelm extolled the great success

of his performances he expressed the utmost indifference upon that subject. "We are accustomed to be laughed at," he observed, "and to hear praises of our feats of skill, but we are never any thing the better for all this mighty approbation. The manager has to pay us, let his funds come from where they may." He then bade him farewell and was about to take his leave instantly.

In reply to the inquiry, "whither he was hastening so speedily?" the fellow smiled, and confessed that his figure and talents had gained him a more solid recompense than the approbation of the public. He had received an invitation from some young ladies who were very anxious for his acquaintance, and he feared he would not be able to complete his numerous visits before midnight. He continued to recount his adventures with much candour, and would have mentioned not only the streets and residences, but the very names of the ladies, if Wilhelm had not admonished him of such indiscretion and politely dismissed him.

Laertes had in the mean time been engaged in entertaining Landrinette and assuring her that she was quite worthy to be and to remain a woman.

The bargain between Wilhelm and the rope-dancer for the child was now concluded. She was sold to the former for thirty thalers, and for that sum the dark complexioned hot-blooded Italian renounced all his claims to her, but of her previous history he would give no account, except that he had taken care of her since the death of his brother, who on account of his extraordinary talents and dexterity had been named "the great devil."

A general search was made for the child, on the following morning. But in vain was every corner of the house and of the neighbourhood explored. She had disappeared, and it was feared on all sides, that she had either drowned herself or that some other misfortune had happened to her.

The charms of Philina were insufficient to appease the inquietude of our friend. He spent a thoughtful, melancholy day, and even in the evening though the tumblers and rope-dancers exerted all their powers to enchant the public, they could not enliven his depressed spirits, or dissipate his sadness.

The crowd of spectators had greatly increased by the

numbers that flocked together from the neighbourhood, and like a snowball, the general approbation swelled to an enormous size. The fearlessness with which the actors leaped over extended swords, or through casks the openings of which were covered with paper, excited a wonderful sensation. The giant too awakened a feeling of universal astonishment and awe, when with his head and feet resting upon two chairs, which were extended at a wide distance from each other, he allowed a sturdy smith to place an anvil on his chest and to beat a horse-shoe into shape.

The performance concluded with a feat called, "The Strength of Hercules," which had never been exhibited in these parts. A row of men bore another row upon their shoulders and these latter in their turn supported a row of women and children, until at length a living pyramid was formed, the point being ornamented by a child standing on its head, and dressed so as to resemble a ball or a weather-cock. Narcisse and Landrinette were then carried in procession on the shoulders of the others through the principal streets amid the general acclamations of the by-standers, ribbons, flowers and silk handkerchiefs were showered upon them, and all pressed forward to see them clearly. It was thought a happiness to behold them and to be honoured by a look in return.

"What author, what actor, nay what man would not think that he had attained the very summit of his ambition, if by means of a noble speech or some illustrious deed he could produce so general an impression? What a delicious sensation would be ours if we could excite, as if by an electric shock, noble, generous and manly feelings in a people,—awaken thousands to happiness, as successfully as these people can give pleasure by a display of their bodily dexterity, if we could impart to the multitude a sympathy for every thing human, if by expounding the laws of happiness and misery, of wisdom and ignorance, of reason and folly, we could move and influence their inmost souls and rouse their stagnant beings into free, pure, unrestrained activity!" Thus spoke our friend, but as neither Philina nor Laertes seemed disposed to engage in such a disquisition, he entertained himself alone with these his favourite theories, pacing the streets to a late hour in the night, and seemingly bent

upon devoting all the force and freedom of his emancipated spirit to the realization of his long cherished desire, viz. to embody for the stage all that is good and great and noble in life.

CHAPTER V.

On the following day when the rope dancers had taken their departure amid great display and parade, Mignon once more made her appearance and entered the apartment where Wilhelm and Laertes were engaged in fencing. "Where have you been concealed?" inquired the former in a kind tone, "you have occasioned us much anxiety." The child made no answer but fixed her eyes upon him. "You belong to us now," said Laertes, "we have bought you." "How much have you paid for me?" asked the child with great composure. "One hundred crowns," replied Laertes, "when you repay them, you shall have your freedom." "Is it much?" inquired the child. "O yes! but you must now behave yourself well." "I will be your servant," she replied.

From that instant she paid particular attention to the duties which the waiter had to perform for her two friends, and on the following day she would not allow him to enter the apartment any more. She insisted upon doing every thing herself, and though she was neither quick nor skilful, she was accurate and careful in all that she performed.

Placing herself frequently before a bason of water, she was accustomed to wash her face with so much violence as to rub the skin from her cheeks. In reply to Laertes' questions, she stated that she was anxious to wash off the rouge, and that in her wish to succeed, she had mistaken the redness which the rubbing had occasioned for the most obstinate dye. She was informed of her error and did it no more, and after a little time she acquired the natural complexion of a beautiful brunette enlivened with a rosy tint.

Engaged in this society, excited no less by the dangerous charms of Philina than by the mysterious presence of this

child, Wilhelm's mind was for many days more strongly agitated than he himself would venture to confess. He endeavoured, however, to stifle the reproaches of his conscience by engaging actively in the exercises of fencing and dancing, accomplishments for which he might not perhaps easily find so convenient an opportunity.

He was not a little surprised and gratified when one day Herr Melina and his wife arrived at the hotel. Having exchanged the first cheerful salutations, they inquired about the lady who had undertaken the duties of manager, as well as about the rest of the company. He learnt to his great dismay that the former had long since left the place and that the company had almost broken up.

After their marriage, a step to which as we are aware Wilhelm had contributed his assistance, they had visited many places in search of an engagement, but without success, and had at length been directed to this little town, as some persons, whom they had accidentally met, informed them that there was a good theatre in the place.

Philina was not much taken with Madame Melina, when they came to know each other, nor indeed was the animated Laertes particularly pleased with her husband. They wished to give up the acquaintance of these strangers, and Wilhelm was unable to change their feelings in this point, though he assured them repeatedly that the Melinas were very worthy people.

To say the truth, the cheerful life of our three friends was affected in more ways than one by this enlargement of their circle. Melina, who had established himself in the same hotel with Philina, commenced a disagreeable system of bargaining for what he wanted. He insisted upon having more luxurious fare, as well as better accommodation and attendance at a cheaper rate. Before long, the landlord and the waiters grew thoroughly dissatisfied, for Wilhelm and his two acquaintances being disposed for happiness, had never expressed discontent with any thing, and had always paid their account for peace sake, but Melina now undertook the arrangement of all the meals and diligently scrutinized the bill of fare before hand, for which reason Philina, without much considering the consequences, bestowed upon him the name of the ruminating animal.

But Madame Melina was an object of special dislike to the merry, thoughtless Philina. She was a woman possessing a certain amount of education, but was sadly deficient in spirit and in soul. Her talent for declamation was considerable, and she was always declaming, but you could easily see that her performance was a mere recitation of words, and though she was effective in some passages, she failed in expressing the full force and passion of the character she represented. But she was notwithstanding a general favourite, particularly with the men. Indeed her intimate friends considered her to possess a fine understanding, and I might say without error that she was a general sympathizer in the emotions of all people. She well knew how to flatter a friend, whose favour she wished to obtain, she could agree in the justice of his views as far as possible, and when they extended beyond the limits of her horizon, she never failed to welcome with extasy, the appearance of such new and brilliant visions. She thoroughly understood the proper times for speaking and for maintaining silence, and though her disposition was wholly free from malice, she could detect with astonishing skill the secret of another's weakness.

CHAPTER VI.

Melina had in the mean time sought information about the scattered wrecks of the late theatre. The decorations and the wardrobe had been deposited with several tradespeople as security for debts, and a notary had received instructions from the directress to make a speedy sale of them, under certain conditions. Melina was anxious to inspect these stores, and took Wilhelm along with him, for the purpose. Upon opening the room where they were collected a certain indescribable sensation came over Wilhelm which he felt unwilling to acknowledge even to himself. Notwithstanding the tarnished state of the ornaments and wardrobe, and of the Turkish and heathen dresses, of the old farce-coats for the actors and actresses, and of the cowls

for monks, Jews and enchanters, he could not help feeling that those were the very happiest moments of his life which he had spent amid similar frippery. If Melina could have known the secret emotions which were working at his heart, he would have pressed him more earnestly to expend a sum of money in purchasing this collection of scattered fragments, in arranging them anew, and of framing them into a beautiful whole. "What a happy mortal," exclaimed Melina, "should I esteem myself, if I possessed but two hundred dollars and could obtain these essentials for the commencement of a theatrical speculation. I should soon be able to open a little theatre in this very town and neighbourhood, quite sufficient to supply all our wants." Wilhelm was silent—and both buried in thought, left the treasures to be once more placed under lock and key.

From this time Melina's whole conversation consisted of projects and plans for the establishment of a theatre and turning it to a profitable account. He endeavoured to interest Philina and Laertes in his scheme, and proposed that Wilhelm should advance a sum of money for the purpose on security. It now occurred to him for the first time that he had too long delayed his departure from this place, but he found convenient excuses for his procrastination, and determined to make preparations for the continuance of his journey.

In the mean time Mignon's personal appearance and disposition were becoming more and more attractive to him, although her whole conduct was singular and mysterious. In ascending or descending the stairs, she never walked, but always bounded along. She would spring forward by the banisters, reach the landing place before you could be aware of her intention, and then quietly take her seat. Wilhelm moreover remarked that she adopted a different kind of salute towards every individual. When saluting him of late she always crossed her arms upon her breast. She frequently remained quite silent for an entire day, sometimes however she answered more readily, but in so strange a way as if to leave it doubtful whether her peculiarity arose from shrewdness or from ignorance of the language, as she generally expressed herself in broken German intermingled with French and Italian. In her attentions

to Wilhelm she was unwearied, rising at the first dawn of day, but she retired early in the evening, sleeping in a little room upon the bare floor, and she could not be persuaded to use either a bed or a straw mattress. He often found her washing herself. In her attire she was cleanly, and her clothes were quilted in double and treble folds. He was informed that she was accustomed to attend mass every morning at an early hour. More than once he followed her thither and watched her as she retired to a corner of the church, whilst with her rosary in her hand she sank down upon her knees and prayed devoutly. She had never noticed him, and upon his return home he became lost in thought about this strange apparition, but was unable to arrive at any certain conclusion about her.

A new application from Melina for a sum of money to purchase the theatrical wardrobe, which formed the never-ending subject of his conversation, determined Wilhelm once more to think of his departure. He resolved, therefore, to write to his friends by the next post, as they had not heard from him for a long time. In fact he had commenced a letter to Werner, and had proceeded to narrate his adventures, in the course of which he had somewhat unintentionally wandered a little from the truth, when to his mortification he found that one side of his letter was already filled with some verses which he had copied from his album for Madame Melina. In his vexation he tore up the letter, and postponed the repetition of his adventures till the following day.

CHAPTER VII.

Our party was once more assembled together, when Philina who attentively watched every horse and carriage that passed before the house, exclaimed in a state of great excitement, "Our Pedant! here comes our darling Pedant! Who can he have with him?" She called to him, and nodded from the window, and the carriage immediately drew up.

A poor, woe-begone looking genius, who from his shabby thread-bare coat and ill-conditioned lower garments, seemed like one of those unthriving tutors who moulder at our Universities, stepped from the carriage, and took off his hat to salute Philina, displaying an ill-powdered stiff periwig, while she in return for the compliment kissed her hand to him a hundred times.

Her chief happiness seemed to consist in loving one set of men, and in engaging their affection, but she allowed herself at the same time another species of enjoyment, and that lay in ridiculing those whom she might at such moment happen not to love, a pastime in which she particularly excelled.

In the tumult with which she welcomed this old friend of hers, the other persons who accompanied him were completely forgotten. Yet Wilhelm thought he remembered the faces of the two girls, and of the old man who had arrived together with him. It appeared that he had frequently seen them before in the company of actors, who, some years ago, had been accustomed to perform in his native town. The ladies had grown considerably since that period, but the old man had not altered perceptibly. He generally played those good-humoured, noisy old characters, which are always found in a German play, and which one sometimes meets in common life. For it is the character of our fellow countrymen not only to do good themselves, but to promote it in others without any display of ostentation or parade: and they seldom consider the charm of combining uprightness with a dignified and graceful manner, and so frequently from a very spirit of contradiction they commit the grievous mistake of deforming the loveliest virtues by their ungracious demeanour.

Our actor played characters of this nature with great skill, and indeed so successfully and so exclusively did he devote himself to such parts, that in common life his manners resembled his performances.

Wilhelm was overpowered with emotion upon recognizing this person. He remembered how often he had seen him on the stage in company with his beloved Mariana. He fancied he could still hear him scolding her, that he could still hear her soft soothing voice—that tender voice with which in many characters it was necessary for her to remonstrate against his angry temper.

To the first inquiry made of the stranger, whether they might entertain any hope of effecting a theatrical engagement, a negative answer was unfortunately returned, accompanied moreover by the information, that all the companies in the neighbouring towns were not only provided with actors, but entertained some apprehensions that the approaching war might compel them to dissolve their several establishments. The old actor, whom we have mentioned, had from a whim and from a love of change abandoned a very advantageous engagement which he had made for himself and his daughters, and meeting with the Pedant on his journey, they had hired a carriage together, and had come on to this place where, as they found, good advice was difficult to procure.

Whilst the rest of the company were busily engaged in discussing their several projects, Wilhelm sat alone buried in thought. He wished to speak in private with the old man, he was anxious to hear some news of Mariana, and yet he dreaded to make any inquiry, and was seized with the greatest disquietude.

Even the personal charms of the young ladies who had lately arrived, could not arouse him from his lethargy, but an angry altercation which took place quickly engaged his attention. It was occasioned by Frederick the fair-haired youth, who was accustomed to wait upon Philina, and who now refused in the most positive manner to lay the table and bring up the dinner. "I have been engaged," he said, "to wait upon you, but not to be the servant of all these people." Hence arose a violent dispute. Philina insisted that he should do his duty, and as he obstinately refused to obey, she told him without ceremony that he might go about his business.

"You think, perhaps, that I cannot leave you," he said, saucily, and hastening away, he proceeded to pack up his things, and left the house.

"Go, Mignon," said Philina, "and get us what we require; —call the waiter, and assist him to attend us."

Mignon ran to Wilhelm, and inquired in her laconic way whether she might comply? and he desired her to do whatever the lady should command her.

She accordingly took charge of everything, and waited on the guests during the whole evening with the greatest assiduity. After dinner Wilhelm proposed to take a walk with

the old man alone. Having obtained his wish, he hazarded many inquiries relative to his previous course of life till the conversation turned upon the former company, and Wilhelm ventured at length to ask a question touching Mariana.

"O, do not mention the wicked creature!" exclaimed the old man, "I have made a vow never to think of her again." Wilhelm was astonished at this speech, and soon found himself in still greater embarrassment when the old man proceeded to accuse her of the most shameless levity and misconduct. Wilhelm would gladly have broken off the conversation, but he was compelled to listen to the noisy effusions of the garrulous old man.

"I feel quite ashamed," he said, "that I was once so warmly attached to her. But if you had known her better you would have excused me. She was so pretty, so natural, and so good, in every way so amiable. In fact I could never have imagined it possible that impudence and ingratitude could form the chief ingredients of her character."

Wilhelm had already made up his mind to hear the worst, when suddenly he observed with astonishment, that the tone of the old man became gradually milder, his voice faltered, and at length he took out his handkerchief to dry the tears which interrupted his observations.

"What is the matter?" exclaimed Wilhelm. "What are these conflicting emotions which so suddenly affect you? Conceal nothing from me, I am more deeply interested in the fate of this girl than you perhaps imagine,—only tell me everything."

"I have but little to communicate," continued the old man, relapsing once more into his former earnest and complaining tone. "I can never forget the sufferings she has occasioned me to endure. She always reposed confidence in me, and I loved her as my own daughter, and as my wife was still alive, I had determined to invite her to my house, and rescue her from the hands of that old fellow, from whose guidance I augured no advantage. But my wife died, and I abandoned my project.

"About three years ago, towards the conclusion of our residence in your native town, observing the state of deep melancholy into which she had fallen, I inquired into the cause, but she persisted in evading my questions. At length

we set out upon our journey. She travelled in the same carriage with me, and I then observed that she was about to become a mother, and she suffered the greatest terror lest the manager should dismiss her from his employment. He discovered the circumstance soon after, and immediately cancelled her engagement which had yet six weeks to run, he paid her arrears, and in spite of all remonstrances left her behind in a wretched inn, in an obscure country village.

"I have no pity for these wanton jades," continued the old man in a tone of vexation, "more particularly for a creature like this, who has embittered so many hours of my existence. Why should I tell you how I took charge of her, toiled for her, opened my purse, and in absence provided for her? It were better to throw my money into the ditch, and spend my time in any profitless pursuit, than bestow the smallest care on such a worthless creature. At first I received a few letters of thanks, informing me of her place of residence. At length her communications ceased, and she did not even evince gratitude for the money I had expended upon her during her confinement. But the treachery and frivolity of women suffice to secure a subsistence for themselves, whilst they occasion weary and anxious hours to many a noble heart."

CHAPTER VIII.

It would not be difficult to conjecture the nature of Wilhelm's feelings as he returned home after this conversation. All his old wounds had been opened afresh, and the conviction that his beloved Mariana was not wholly unworthy of his affection had been once more renewed within his mind. In the interest which the old man had displayed in her behalf, and in the reluctant praises in which he had indulged, Wilhelm saw clearly the whole power of her attractions, and even the severity of his censure was unable to lower her in his estimation. Her accuser had indeed admitted that he was himself a partner in all her faults, and her very silence at length appeared excusable, or at least only served to awaken mournful feelings in his mind. His imagination pictured her as she wandered destitute through

the world, a weak and helpless mother, bending under the burden of a child that was perhaps his own, and the thought awakened in his bosom feelings of the most intense anguish.

Mignon had been expecting his arrival, and accompanied him on his way up stairs. When she had put down the light, she requested that she might be allowed to perform before him that evening for his amusement. He would rather have declined, particularly as he was ignorant of the nature of the intended exhibition, but he could not refuse any request which the kind creature might make. She disappeared for a short time, but soon returned carrying a small carpet beneath her arm, which she spread upon the floor. Wilhelm allowed her to proceed. She then brought four candles and placed one upon each corner of the carpet. A basket of eggs which she now produced displayed the nature of her intention more clearly. With carefully measured steps she proceeded to walk backwards and forwards upon the carpet, laying down the eggs at certain intervals, after which she called to a man who was in waiting for her summons and who could play upon the violin. He retired into one corner of the room with his instrument, whereupon she tied a handkerchief before her eyes, gave the sign, and instantly like a piece of machinery set suddenly in motion, she commenced a series of graceful gestures, keeping time accurately with the music, and marking the notes with the sound of her castanets.

Nimbly, lightly, and with quick precision she carried on the dance. Her step was so sure and so true between the eggs and beside them, that it seemed impossible to avoid treading upon some or disturbing others in the rapidity of her movements. But no! she touched none, though she passed through the labyrinth with every variety of step wide and narrow, at one time dancing, and then gracefully bending till she almost touched the ground with her knees.

Continuous as the motion of a clock she pursued her course, and the strange music as it was repeated, even lent a new impulse to the dance, which again commenced afresh, and so continuing, was brought at length to a conclusion.

This singular spectacle completely captivated Wilhelm. All at once he forgot the weight of his own cares and followed every movement of the lovely creature who sported

before him, and he began to observe with surprise how remarkably the dance tended to unfold her character.

In her movements she was exact, precise, and reserved, but vehement, and in situations where tenderness was to be displayed, she was more formal than attractive. Wilhelm once more felt all his fondness for her to revive. He longed to take this forsaken child to his heart, to hold her in his embrace, and with the fulness of a father's love to awaken within her bosom all the joys of existence.

The dance was now concluded. Softly with her foot Mignon rolled the eggs together into a little heap, neither forgetting nor injuring any of them, then taking her place beside them, she removed the bandage from her eyes, and finished her performance with a graceful bow.

Wilhelm thanked her for having so cleverly, as well as so unexpectedly, performed a dance which he had long desired to witness. He patted her and expressed his regret that she had undergone so much fatigue. He promised however that she should have a new frock, to which she answered with great eagerness, "Then it must be one of your own colour!" He promised that it should be so, without however very clearly understanding what she meant. She then collected her eggs, took her carpet beneath her arm, inquired whether Wilhelm wanted any thing more, and bounded from the apartment.

He was informed by the musician that for some time past she had taken considerable trouble to instruct him in the music of the dance which she had performed. It was the well-known fandango, and for this purpose she had sung over the tune to him repeatedly. She had also wished to pay him for his trouble, but he had persisted in refusing the money which she offered.

CHAPTER IX.

WILHELM passed an anxious night, either wholly awake, or else tossing restlessly in troubled dreams. At one time he beheld Mariana arrayed in all her beauty—at another

time he saw her sunk in deep distress—and presently she appeared to be carrying a child in her arms, of which she was soon afterwards bereaved. The morning had scarcely dawned before Mignon made her appearance—she was accompanied by a tailor. She had in her hands some grey cloth and blue taffeta, and declared in her own artless way, that she wanted a new jacket and sailor's trousers, ornamented with blue cuffs and ribbons, as she had seen them worn by the boys in the street.

Wilhelm, since his separation from Mariana, had discontinued the use of all gay colours. He had adopted grey, the colour of the shades, and his sober apparel was enlivened by nothing more cheerful than a trimming of sky blue, or perhaps a collar of the same. Mignon, who was anxious to assume the colour which he liked, urged the tailor to be expeditious, and he promised that his work should soon be completed.

The fencing and dancing lessons which Wilhelm took on this day from Laertes, were attended with but little advantage. They were interrupted by the appearance of Melina, who had come to explain circumstantially how a little company of actors had now been got together, sufficient, as he said, to perform plays of every description. He then renewed his proposal to Wilhelm, that the latter should advance funds for a theatrical undertaking; to which, however, he resolutely refused to accede.

Soon afterwards, Philina and the girls came in, making their usual clatter, and bursting into fits of merry laughter. They had, it appeared, arranged another excursion; for change of place, and variety of every kind, were schemes which incessantly occupied their thoughts. Their highest delight consisted in dining every day in a different place, and upon the present occasion they contemplated the enjoyment of a trip by water.

A boat for the purpose, in which they intended to explore the windings of the romantic river, had already been engaged by the Pedant. Philina encouraged the proposal, all parties seemed perfectly willing, and the company was soon on board.

"How shall we amuse ourselves in the first instance?" inquired Philina, as soon as they had taken their seats.

"The easiest thing to do," replied Laertes, "would be to extemporize a play. Let each of us assume a character best suited to his talents, and we shall soon see how the scheme will prosper."

"Capital!" said Wilhelm. "And yet," he continued, "in a company where no disguise is practised, where every one without restraint follows his own inclination, there cannot be much elegance or satisfaction, and this will also be the case where too much disguise is assumed. We had better, therefore, begin with a show of disguise, and then from behind our masks we may be as candid as we please."

"Yes!" observed Laertes, "it is for this reason that the society of women is always so charming; they never shew themselves in their natural characters."

"In other words," observed Madame Melina, "they have less vanity than men, who always fancy they are attractive enough, just as nature has made them."

In the meantime, the course of the river had carried them through a country diversified with charming undulations and woods, with gardens and vineyards, and the young ladies, but particularly Madame Melina, expressed their great delight at the beauty of the landscape. The latter, indeed, burst into the recital of a sweet poem of the descriptive kind, upon a similar beautiful prospect, but she was interrupted by Philina, who proposed an agreement that no one should venture to speak of anything inanimate, and she urged the adoption of the previous proposal to extemporize a play. "The old man," she said, "could be a half-pay officer; Laertes might be a fencing-master unemployed; the Pedant, a jew, whilst she herself would act the part of a Tyrolese peasant, and the rest of the company might choose whatever characters they pleased. They might fancy they were total strangers to each other, and that they had met for the first time on board a ship."

She commenced at once to perform her part by entering into conversation with the jew, and a general cheerfulness was soon diffused around.

They had not long continued their course upon the river when the boatman requested permission to take in a stranger, who was standing on the bank, and had beckoned to him.

"That is just what we want," cried Philina, "a chance

passenger is the very thing required to make our travelling party perfect."

A gentlemanly looking man now stepped into the boat. From his dress and dignified appearance he might have been taken for a country clergyman. He saluted the company, who thanked him in their several ways and informed him of the nature of the pastime in which they were engaged. He immediately assumed the character of a country clergyman, and played his part to their general satisfaction, in the most perfect manner, at one moment offering wholesome advice, at another relating lively anecdotes, and observing upon sundry little weaknesses and defects of character which he had observed, but never forfeiting the respect of his companions.

In the meantime every one who had committed any, even the slightest mistake, had paid a forfeit. Philina had made a collection of them with praiseworthy industry and had already threatened the clergyman with the infliction of countless kisses when the forfeits should be released, although in point of fact he had not made a single mistake. Melina, however, had been fairly plundered, studs, buckles and all his personal ornaments had fallen into Philina's hands. He had undertaken to personate an English tourist, a character in which he found himself completely at fault.

The time thus passed away in the most agreeable manner possible. Each one of the party had found abundant opportunity for exercising his fancy and his wit, and they had all seasoned their respective parts with pleasant and entertaining jokes. At length they reached the spot where they intended to pass the day, and Wilhelm soon found himself engaged in a walk and in a most agreeable conversation with the clergyman, for so we shall now call him, in conformity with his appearance and the character which he had lately assumed.

"I think," observed the stranger, "that this sort of practice must be very useful for actors, when it is carried on in the company of their friends and acquaintances. It seems to me the best mode that could be adopted for drawing men out of themselves, as it were, and for causing them by a

circuitous route, to return again to themselves. It should be a rule in every company of actors to practise in this manner, and the public would be the gainers, if every month an unwritten play were performed in which the actors should have prepared themselves by several previous rehearsals."

"But," answered Wilhelm, "we ought not to require that every extemporized piece should be wholly composed at the very moment, but should feel satisfied if the plan, the treatment and division of the scenes were previously arranged, and the completion merely left to the talents of the actor."

"Quite right," replied the stranger, "and with regard to this completion, as you term it, a play of such a kind would gain in many particulars after the actors should have had the advantage of a little training. I do not mean, however, in respect to the composition, for verbal ornaments are the province of the studious author, but in respect to action, looks, gestures and things of that nature, in short, to all that silent by-play which seems to be gradually forsaking the stage. I admit there are some performers in Germany, whose acting does represent their thoughts and their feelings, who by means of pauses, silence and looks as well as by light and graceful movements prepare their audience for a speech, and by a charming sort of a pantomime, unite the breaks in the dialogue with the whole entertainment; but a practice of this kind which should assist a happy natural talent, and help it elucidate the author, is less common than, for the gratification of the public, we could desire."

"But," said Wilhelm, "will not that happy natural talent, as the first and last essential, enable not only an actor, but every artist, and every other man to attain the very highest object of his ambition?"

"The first and last essential it may be—the beginning and the end—but in the middle, the artist will find himself deficient in many requisites if education, and early education too, have not previously moulded him into that form which he is to retain, and perhaps on this point, the man commonly styled a genius, labours under greater disadvantages than he who possesses only ordinary talents, as the one can be more easily misinstructed and driven more irretrievably into a wrong direction than the other."

"But will not genius save itself?" asked Wilhelm, "is she not competent to heal her self-inflicted wounds?"

"By no means," answered his companion, "or only to a very trifling extent, and even then with extreme difficulty. For no one should flatter himself that he can overcome the impressions of his early youth. If he has been educated in happy freedom, surrounded by beautiful and noble objects, in constant intercourse with worthy men, if his instructors have taught him what it was necessary for him first to learn, in order that his subsequent education might be more easily completed, if he has never learned what must afterwards be unlearnt, if his earliest conduct has been so regulated, that without renouncing any of his habits, he is capable afterwards of producing what is excellent, such a man will lead a purer, more perfect, and a happier life than another who has consumed his youthful energies in struggles and in error. Much is said and written about education, but I find very few indeed who are capable of understanding and adopting the simple and comprehensive idea of education, which includes every thing within itself."

"That may well be the case," said Wilhelm, "for most men are narrow-minded enough to wish that all others should be educated after their own model. Happy those whom fate protects and educates according to his talents."

"Fate," said the other, with a smile, "is in truth an excellent but a dear instructor. I should rather rely upon the understanding of a human teacher. Fate, whose wisdom I supremely respect, sometimes finds in chance through which it works, an unaccommodating instrument. For the operations of the latter are seldom in complete or perfect accordance with the decisions of the former."

"You appear to me to express a very extraordinary opinion," rejoined Wilhelm.

"Not at all. The experience of the world will on the whole, justify my opinion. Are not many things very mighty in their beginnings, which after all, terminate very absurdly?"

"You jest."

"By no means," continued the other. "And is not this precisely the case with individuals? Suppose fate had destined a man to become a good actor—and why should fate not pro-

vide us with good actors?—and that chance should unfortunately lead the youth to a puppet-show—might he not there acquire an early love for what is tasteless and degrading, tolerate the veriest insipidities, and eventually witness them with interest and pleasure, thus corrupting his early impressions which it is impossible afterwards ever to efface, and from whose influence one can never become wholly detached."

"But why speak of puppet-shows?" asked Wilhelm, interrupting his companion with some amazement.

"An accidental illustration," replied the other, "but if it does not please you, let us take another. Suppose fate had destined a man to become a great painter, and it had pleased chance that his youth should be spent in dark huts, and amongst barns and stables, do you think that such a man could ever succeed in attaining a proper nobleness, purity and elevation of soul? The more strongly he may have become connected in his youth with the impure, which he may have sought, with his utmost talents, to ennoble, the more rigorously will it wreak vengeance upon him during the remainder of his life, because during his efforts to conquer its influence, it has become entwined with his very being. Whoever spends his youth in the society of low and ignoble companions, will never fail in after life, even with better society at his command, to regret the loss of those associates who have left an impression upon his mind, blended with a memory of youthful joys which never can return."

We may readily suppose that during this conversation, the remainder of the company had gradually retired to a distance. Indeed, Philina had taken her departure at the very commencement, but the whole party met once more at a cross avenue. Philina now produced the forfeits which were in various ways to be redeemed. During the entire proceeding, the stranger won the good will of the whole party, and more particularly of the ladies by his happy suggestions, and by his unrestrained participation in the general mirth, and thus the hours of the day passed over in merriment, in singing, in kissing, and all kinds of pastime.

CHAPTER X.

As the party was now about to return home, they looked about for their clergyman, but he had disappeared and was nowhere to be found.

"It is not quite correct for one, who in other respects has acted politely enough," said Madame Melina, "to desert a company who had received him so hospitably, without even bidding them farewell."

"It has occurred to me more than once," observed Laertes, "that I have met this singular person somewhere or other before. It was my intention to question him on the subject before we separated."

"I have thought the same thing," said Wilhelm, "and I should certainly not have allowed him to depart without learning something of his circumstances. I sadly mistake if I have not spoken to him before."

"And yet you may be very grossly mistaken upon this point," said Philina, "he seems to you to have the air of an acquaintance, because he looks like a man, an individual character, and does not resemble Jack or Ned."

"What do you mean?" inquired Laertes, "do we not also look like men?"

"I know what I have said," replied Philina, "and if you do not understand me, it is not of much consequence. I shall after all have no occasion to explain my meaning."

Two carriages now drew up, and the whole party praised the attention of Laertes, by whom they had been ordered. Philina took her seat next to Madame Melina, and opposite to Wilhelm. The rest of the company arranged themselves as best they could. Laertes rode home on Wilhelm's horse which had been brought out upon the occasion.

Philina had scarcely taken her seat in the carriage before she commenced singing some pretty songs, and gradually turned the conversation to some stories, from which, she said, a series of dramas might very readily be constructed. By this clever contrivance, she at once put Wilhelm into the best possible humour, and forthwith, from the wealth of his vivid imagination, he composed an entire play, complete in every respect, plot, scenes, acts, and characters. It was

considered an improvement to introduce some airs and songs. They were composed instantly, and Philina, who entered cordially into the amusement, adapted the words to some well-known tunes, and sang them extempore.

She was in one of her most agreeable humours to-day; she succeeded in amusing Wilhelm with all manner of diverting trifles, and he himself had not for a long time enjoyed so much happiness.

Ever since he had made that appalling discovery which had torn him from Mariana's arms, he had continued firm to the vow which he then made to resist in future the ensnaring charms of woman; to avoid the faithless sex, and to restrain within his own bosom the soft pains and sweet delights of love. The conscientious firmness with which he had hitherto kept this resolution, had imparted new vigour to his nature; and as his heart was unable to exist without sympathy, he pined now for the sweet interchange of reciprocal affection. Thus he once more became environed with dim visions of his youthful joys; his eye rested with gladness on every object which possessed a charm, and he had never felt more disposed than at present to pass a favourable judgment upon a lovely form. In such a disposition of mind, we may conceive how dangerous to him must have been the influence of the wild and giddy being with whom he had now become acquainted.

On reaching home, they found that Wilhelm's apartment had been set in order, and prepared for their reception. The chairs had been arranged as for the reading of a lecture. The table stood in the middle of the room, ready to receive the punch-bowl, which was destined subsequently to take its place thereupon.

The German chivalry-plays were at that time new, and had just begun to excite the attention and interest of the public. The old actor had brought one of these with him, and they had unanimously agreed that it should now be read aloud. The company accordingly sat down, and Wilhelm having taken possession of the book, began to read.

The description of the armed knights, the ancient castles, the true-heartedness, sincerity, and honesty of the characters portrayed, were received with universal approbation. The reader exerted his powers to the utmost, and the audience

became enraptured with delight. Between the third and fourth acts, the punch was introduced in an ample bowl, and as the piece itself was replete with scenes of drinking and fighting, it seemed but natural that on every such occasion the audience should take the place of the heroes during the imaginary combats, and drink to the prosperity of the heroes whose deeds had won their admiration.

Each individual of the party became inflamed with the glorious spirit of national enthusiasm. And they found inexpressible delight in the reflection that a German company was entertained in this poetic manner, upon their own soil, and so thoroughly in conformity with their own character. The vaults and cellars, the ruined castles, the moss-covered towers, and the hollow trees, but, above all, the midnight gipsy scenes, and the secret tribunals, produced an indescribable effect. Every actor now understood how, clad in helmet and cuirass, and accompanied by his partner, ornamented with expanded ruff, it would become them to represent the national character to the public. Each one insisted on instantly assuming a name taken from the piece, and Madame Melina vowed that the son or daughter with which she hoped soon to be blest, should on no account be christened by any other name than Albert or Matilda.

Towards the fifth act, the applause became louder and more boisterous, until finally, when the hero proved victorious over his oppressor, and the tyrant met with deserved punishment, the delight of all became so intense that they vowed they had never known such blissful moments. Melina, inspired by his copious libations, was the loudest in his exclamations of rapture, and when the second punch-bowl had been drained, and the midnight hour approached, Laertes swore vehemently that no human being was worthy again to touch the glasses with his lips; and with this exclamation, he flung his own through the window into the street. His companions followed his example, and in spite of the protestations of the host, who had hastened to the scene of revelry, the punch-bowl itself, to avoid the possibility of pollution from unholy liquor at a similar feast, was dashed into a thousand pieces. Philina's state of excitement was less observable than that of her companions, who had flung themselves upon the sofa in no very elegant postures, whilst

she maliciously encouraged the general tumult. Madame Melina commenced the recitation of some heroic verses, whilst her husband, who was never very amiable in his cups, found fault with the preparation of the punch, asserting that he could arrange a party of a far superior kind, until, becoming ruder and noisier as Laertes commanded silence, the latter inconsiderately increased the general confusion by flinging the fragments of the broken punch-bowl at his head.

The town patrol had arrived in the meantime, and insisted on admission into the house. Wilhelm, who had drunk but little, though he was much excited by his reading, found some difficulty, even with the assistance of the host, to appease them by money and fair promises, and to dismiss the different members of the company to their respective homes, in consequence of their helpless condition. Discontented and overcome by sleep, upon his return he flung himself down upon his bed without undressing, and nothing could equal his dissatisfaction when he awoke on the following morning, and dimly recalled the boisterous scenes of the previous day, and thought over the folly and general bad results which had flowed from their attempts to give effect to a talented and inspired poetical performance.

CHAPTER XI.

After a brief reflection, Wilhelm summoned the host, and desired him to place to his account, not only the proper charges, but likewise all the damages which had been committed. He learned at the same time, to his great vexation, that his horse had been so much injured by Laertes during the excursion of the previous day, that it was rendered completely useless, and the farrier gave very little hope of its ultimate recovery.

A salute from Philina, with which she greeted him from the window, soon restored him to his former cheerfulness, and he went at once into the nearest shop to purchase a little present, which he owed her in return for the powder knife already mentioned, and we must admit that he did not confine himself within the strict limits of equivalent value. He bought not only a pair of very handsome ear-rings, but

also a bonnet and a shawl, and some other trifles, similar to those of which she had been so lavish upon the first day of their acquaintance.

Madame Melina, who chanced to observe him in the act of delivering his presents, found an opportunity before dinner to remonstrate with him seriously about his partiality for this girl; but he was much surprised at her interference, believing there was nothing which he deserved less than a reproach upon such a subject. He protested vehemently that he had never even entertained the idea of an attachment for a person with whose conduct he was so well acquainted, and he offered general excuses for his friendly and polite conduct towards her, without, however, satisfying Madame Melina. On the contrary, the vexation of that lady became greater, as she observed that the course of flattery by which she had herself won the partiality of Wilhelm, was insufficient to secure her conquest from the attacks of a younger, more talented, and more animated rival.

Her husband, also, upon sitting down to table, showed signs of vexation and discontent, and he was beginning to display his ill-temper in many trifling ways, when the host entered, and introduced a player upon the harp. "I know," he said, "that you will be charmed with the performance, as well as with the singing, of this man. No person who hears him can refrain from admiring his skill, and relieving his wants."

"Let him leave us," answered Melina, "I am in no humour now to listen to a wandering minstrel, and besides, we are well enough provided with singers of our own, who have no objection to earn a trifle." In saying this, he cast a look of malice at Philina. She understood him without difficulty, and to his great mortification she instantly undertook the defence of the harper, and turning towards Wilhelm, she inquired, "Shall we not hear the man? Can we do nothing to relieve ourselves from this dreadful ennui?"

Melina was about to reply; and an angry contest would doubtless have ensued, if Wilhelm had not in a friendly manner welcomed the harper, who entered the room at that very moment, and was invited to approach.

The remarkable appearance of their guest astonished the whole company, and he had already taken possession of a

chair, before any one found courage enough to ask him a single question, or to offer a remark. A few grey hairs encircled his bald head, and his large blue eyes beamed benevolently from beneath his long white eyebrows. His nose was beautifully shaped. His beard was hoary and flowing, but did not entirely conceal the form of his sweetly smiling lips; whilst a long dark-brown tunic wrapped his slender body from the neck to his very feet. He now began to play a prelude upon his harp, which he had brought towards him.

The delicious sounds which he drew from the instrument entranced his whole audience.

"Do you not sing as well as play, my kind old man?" inquired Philina.

"Give us something," said Wilhelm, "that will enchant our hearts and souls as well as our senses. Instruments should only serve as accompaniments to the voice; for melodies and tunes without words and meaning, appear to me like butterflies or beautiful humming birds, which hover round us in the air, and which we could wish to catch and make our own, whilst song, on the other hand, like a genius, aspires to heaven, and entices that better self which dwells within us to bear him company."

The old man looked at Wilhelm; then raising his eyes, and striking a few notes upon his harp, he commenced to sing. His subject was the eulogy of minstrelsy; he praised the happiness of bards, and admonished men to pay them honour. He sang with so much animation and truth that it seemed as if he had composed it for that very occasion. With difficulty Wilhelm refrained from embracing him; but the fear of occasioning a laugh at his own expense, confined him to his seat, whilst the rest of the company employed themselves in making some foolish observations upon the harper, and discussing whether he were a Papist or a Jew.

Wilhelm inquired who was the author of the song, but could obtain no positive information; he was told that the author was a person rich in songs, and only anxious that they should please. The company now became for the most part merry and cheerful, and even Melina shewed a sort of frankness, after his own peculiar fashion. Whilst they all

chatted and joked together, the old man began in the most animated style to sing a eulogium upon the delights of social intercourse. With winning tones, he celebrated the charms of harmony and courtesy. Suddenly the style of his music became cold, harsh, and discordant. In mournful strains, he now sang the evils of detested selfishness, of short-sighted enmity, and of baleful discord; but the hearts of his audience soon felt relieved from these oppressive restraints, while soaring aloft on the pinions of delicious melody, he poured forth a tribute in honour of peace-makers, and sang the rapture of souls who forget the pangs of separation in the joys of restored love.

He had scarcely ended, when Wilhelm exclaimed, "Whoever you are, who, like a guardian angel visit us, whose sweet voice brings to us a blessing and a consolation, accept my homage and my thanks! Know that we all admire you, and trust in us if ever you should find yourself in need."

The old harper remained silent; his fingers wandered carelessly among the chords of his instrument; finally, he struck them more boldly, and sang as follows:—

What sounds are those which from the wall,
And o'er the bridge I hear?
Those strains should echo through this hall,
And greet a monarch's ear.
So spake the King—the page retires—
His answer brought, the King desires
The Minstrel to appear.

Hail, Sire! and hail each gallant knight!
Fair dames, I greet ye well!
Like Heaven, this hall with stars is bright,
But who your names may tell?
What matchless glories round me shine!
But 'tis not now for eyes like mine
On scenes like these to dwell.

The Minstrel raised his eyes inspired,
And struck a thrilling strain,
Each hero's heart is quickly fired,
Each fair one thrills with pain:
The King, enchanted with the Bard,
His magic talent to reward,
Presents his golden chain.

O! deck me with no chain of gold,
Such gift becomes the knight,
Before whose warrior eyes so bold,
The rushing squadrons fight,
Or let the glittering bauble rest
Upon your Chancellor's honoured breast—
He'll deem the burden light.

I sing but as the young bird sings,
That carols in the tree,
The rapture of the music brings
Its own reward to me.
Yet would I utter one request—
That of your wine—one cup—the best,
Be given to-day by thee.

The cup is brought—the Minstrel quaffed;
He thrills with joy divine—
Thrice happy home, where such a draught
Is given—and none repine!
When fortune smiles, then think of me,
And thank kind Heaven, as I thank thee,
For such a cup of wine.

When the harper, at the conclusion of his song, seized a goblet of wine that stood before him, and turning towards his benefactors, quaffed it off with a look of thankfulness, a shout of joy arose from the whole assembly. They expressed their wishes amid a general clapping of hands, that the wine which he had drunk might restore his strength, and refresh his aged limbs. He then sang several other ballads, and still further excited the hilarity of the company.

"Old man," inquired Philina, "do you know the song styled, 'The Shepherd adorned himself for the dance?'"

"O yes!" he answered, "if you will sing it, I will gladly accompany you."

Philina stood up, and prepared to perform her part. The harper commenced the air, and she sang the words. We shall not trouble our readers by repeating them, as they might consider the ballad uninteresting, or composed in bad taste. In the meantime, the company were growing a little noisy. They had drunk several flasks of wine, and were becoming somewhat excited. But as the evil results of their late convivial entertainment were fresh in the memory of

our friend, he felt anxious to break up the party, and therefore, paying the old harper liberally for his trouble, to which the others likewise contributed, the latter was allowed to retire, the company promising themselves new delight from a repetition of his performance in the evening.

As soon as he was gone, Wilhelm observed to Philina, "I am unable to see any merit, either poetical or moral, in this favourite song of yours, but if you were to introduce some worthy composition upon the stage, with your own peculiar grace, simplicity, and elegance, it could not fail to win a warm and general approbation."

"Yes," answered Philina, "it would indeed be a delightful sensation to warm one's self at ice."

"But, in truth," said Wilhelm, "this man might make many an actor feel ashamed. Did you mark how correct was the dramatic expression of his ballads? There was, in fact, a more animated force of representation in his songs than you will find in more than one pedantic actor on our boards. It would, indeed, be easy to mistake the acting of some pieces for a mere narrative, and we might clothe these musical narratives with a living embodiment."

"You are not quite just," answered Laertes, "I claim no great merit, either as a singer or as an actor, but of this I feel convinced, that when music guides the motions of the body, imparting to them an animation which is governed by prescribed rules of time; when declamation and expression are provided for me by the composer, my sensations are wholly different from those which I experience in the prosaic drama, where I must invent both action and declamation for myself, and where I may be disturbed by the ignorance of a fellow-actor."

"If I may venture an opinion," said Melina, "this man may put us to the blush in one respect, and that too in a material point. The strength of his talent is proved by the profit which he can derive from it. He compels us, who perhaps find it difficult to provide food for ourselves, to share our meal with him. He possesses skill enough to extract from our pockets by the magic of his song, the money which we may yet need to provide employment for ourselves. So happy do we feel in squandering the means upon which depends the very subsistence of ourselves and others."

This remark gave a disagreeable turn to the conversation. Wilhelm, who felt reproved, answered with some degree of warmth; and Melina, who never weighed his expressions very carefully, gave vent to his complaints in not very courteous observations. "It is now," he said, "just a fortnight since we examined the theatre and its wardrobe, which are in pledge in this place, and the whole might have been redeemed for a trifling sum of money. You allowed me to entertain hopes that you would lend me the necessary amount, but I am not yet aware that you have thought more of the matter, or are now nearer to a determination. Had you then decided, we should have made some progress before this time. You have not yet fulfilled your intention to set out upon your travels, and it does not appear to me that you have in the meanwhile saved much money, at least there are persons who have found means to make it disappear."

This reproach, not wholly undeserved, wounded Wilhelm keenly. He made a sharp and angry reply, and when the company rose to depart, he seized the handle of the door, and gave unequivocal evidence that it was not his intention to continue much longer in such rude and ungrateful company. Quite out of humour, he descended the stairs, and seating himself on a stone bench which stood before the door of his hotel, he did not discover that, half out of mirth, and half out of discontent, he had drunk more wine than was his custom.

CHAPTER XII.

After Wilhelm had spent some time thus sitting in solitude, gazing on vacancy, and a prey to numberless distressing reflections, Philina came tripping and singing through the doorway, and seated herself down beside him. Indeed, it might be almost said that she sat in his lap, so closely did she press to him. She leaned upon his shoulder, played with his curls, patted his cheeks, and addressed him n the kindest terms. She implored that he would remain with them, and not leave her alone with the company, or she

must die of ennui. She had found it impossible to live under the same roof with Melina, and had therefore taken up her quarters in the other hotel.

In vain did he resist her entreaties, and seek to make her comprehend how he dared not, under any circumstances, postpone his departure. She persisted in her entreaties, and suddenly throwing her arms round his neck, she kissed him in the fondest and most affectionate manner imaginable.

"Are you mad?" cried Wilhelm, endeavouring to escape from her embrace, "to make the public street the scene of your caresses, to which, moreover, I can have no possible claim? Let me go; I neither can nor will remain."

"And I will hold you fast," she answered, "and will continue to kiss you here in the public street, till you have promised what I want. I shall die of laughing," she continued. "This display of affection will persuade the good people here that I am a newly-married wife, and all the husbands who witness the tender scene will point me out to their spouses as a pattern of innocent and simple affection."

Some persons passed by at that very moment, and she began to caress him in the most loving manner, and in order to avoid giving scandal, he felt himself compelled to play the part of a submissive husband. She then made faces at the people when their backs were turned, and full of wildness she continued to commit all sorts of improprieties, until at last he was obliged to promise that he would not go to-day, nor to-morrow, nor the next day.

"You are a regular simpleton!" she then said, as she rose to leave him, "and I am a fool to lavish so much kindness upon you." After going a short distance she turned round with a smile and added, "I believe that is the reason why I am so crazy about you, but I must go and fetch my knitting that I may not be idle. Do you remain here, that on my return I may find the stone man still seated on the stone bench."

In this instance however she did him injustice, for notwithstanding that he had sought to restrain her vehemence, it is not improbable that had he at that very time found himself alone with her in a solitary bower, he might have returned her caresses with interest.

Throwing a hasty glance after him she hastened into the

house. He had no reason to follow her, indeed her conduct had rather excited his disgust, and yet he rose from his seat, without exactly knowing why, and went after her into the house.

He was in the act of crossing the threshold when Melina passed, and addressing him respectfully, begged his pardon for some hasty expressions which he had used during their last conversation. "You will excuse me," he said, "if I have been rendered irritable by the condition in which I find myself placed. The anxiety of providing for a wife and perhaps soon for a child forbids that I should feel the same daily quiet enjoyment of life which you experience. Reflect upon the subject again, and if it be possible, procure the theatrical apparatus for me. I shall not be your debtor long, though I shall owe you gratitude for ever."

Wilhelm found himself stopped thus unexpectedly at the threshold over which an irresistible attraction urged him to pursue Philina, and he answered with a sudden absence of mind, and the hasty impulse of good nature. "If I can secure your happiness I will not dwell upon the matter any longer. Go and make all necessary arrangements. I shall be prepared to pay down the money either this evening or to-morrow morning,"—and so saying he gave his hand to Melina, in confirmation of his promise, and felt delighted when he saw the latter hastening away along the street. Unfortunately his entrance to the house was now retarded by a second occurrence of a more disagreeable nature than the former.

A young man carrying a bundle upon his back came rapidly along the street and approached Wilhelm, who recognised him instantly as Friedrich.

"Here I am once more!" he cried, looking joyously around with his large blue eyes, and surveying all the windows of the house. "Where is Mademoiselle? I find it impossible to wander through the world any longer without seeing her."

The host who had just appeared, answered that she was up stairs. With a few bounds Friedrich disappeared, and Wilhelm remained alone as if rooted to the spot. At first he had felt tempted to drag the youth back by the hair, but soon the keen pang of a powerful jealousy stopped the flow

of his spirits and the course of his ideas, and when by degrees he had recovered from his astonishment, he was seized with a disquiet and a restlessness such as he had never in his life experienced.

He retired to his apartment where he found Mignon busily employed in writing. She had for some time laboured hard in copying out every thing which she knew by heart, and she always handed her exercise to her friend and master to correct. She was an industrious child and possessed an excellent understanding, but her letters were always unevenly written and her lines were invariably crooked. Even here the body seemed to contradict the mind. The application of the child was a source of great delight to Wilhelm, when he was undisturbed by other troubles, but now he paid but little attention to her. She felt distressed at his indifference, and was vexed the more because she thought that upon this occasion, she had been quite successful in the performance of her task.

Wilhelm's restlessness now drove him to wander through the different passages of the house, and at length he once more approached the door. He observed a horseman galloping by. He was a man of respectable appearance, of middle age, and possessing a cheerful and contented look. The host hastened towards him, extending his hand as to an old friend, and said, "Ah, Herr Stallmeister, do we see you once more amongst us?"

"I must pause to feed my horse here," answered the stranger, "I am on my way to the estate to have everything put in order as quickly as possible. The Count is expected to-morrow with his lady, they will remain here for some time to entertain the Prince of ——— in the best style. The latter will probably establish his head quarters in the neighbourhood."

"It is a pity that you cannot stay with us," replied the host, "we have good company here at present." The servant now appeared and took the horse from the Stallmeister, who thereupon entered into friendly conversation with the host, and the former turned round from time to time to take a look at Wilhelm.

Our friend observing that he was the subject of conversation, retired and pursued his solitary way along the street.

CHAPTER XIII.

In his present restless state of anxiety, he determined now to go and pay a visit to the old harper, with the expectation that his music would allay the evil spirit that tormented him. Upon inquiring for the man, Wilhelm was directed to a poor public house in a distant corner of the town, where having ascended the stairs to the very garret, he heard the sweet sounds of the harp issuing from a small chamber. They were heart-moving, melancholy sounds, and served as the accompaniment to a sad and mournful song. Wilhelm crept softly to the door, and as the good old man was performing a sort of fantasia, of which he many times repeated several of the stanzas, partly in recitation and partly in singing, he succeeded after paying close attention for a short time, in collecting the following words:

Whose bread hath ne'er been steeped in tears,
Whose tranquil nights are free from woe,
Untaught by grief and dismal fears
The power of Fate can never know.

To Fate the wretched owe their birth,
And all the guilt they feel within,
Avenged and punished on this earth
By deep remorse that follows sin.

The soul-sick, melancholy strain, pierced deep into the heart of Wilhelm. He thought he could perceive more than once that the song of the old man was interrupted by his tears; for sometimes the harp-strings sounded alone, till, after a short time, they were once more accompanied by a voice, in low and broken tones. Wilhelm continued in silence listening at the door, his soul was deeply moved; the sorrow of this stranger had again opened all his heart, he gave vent to the full tide of his sympathy, and was both unwilling and unable to restrain the torrent of tears which the sad strain of the old man called forth. He now felt the full force of every sorrow which had oppressed his soul, and he abandoned himself without reserve to their united in-

fluence. At length he pushed open the door of the chamber, and stood before the harper. He was seated upon a miserable bed, the only piece of furniture with which his humble dwelling was supplied.

"What emotions have you not awakened within me, good old man," he cried, "your song has thawed the frozen current of my heart. Let me not interrupt you, but continue your efforts to assuage your own sorrows, and thus to render your friend happy." The harper wished to rise from his seat and speak, but Wilhelm prevented him; for he had observed before that the old man did not like conversing, so he sat down beside him on the straw bed.

The old man dried his tears, and asked with a cheerful smile, "How came you hither? I intended to visit you again this evening."

"We shall be more private here," answered Wilhelm. "But sing for me again—whatever you please, whatever accords best with your own feelings; and forget, if possible, that I am here. I think you cannot fail to-day. You must be very happy in being able thus to find pleasure and employment in solitude; and though you are everywhere a stranger, always to find in your own heart the most delightful society."

The old man looked down upon his harp, and when he had finished a soft prelude, he thus commenced:

The man who pines for solitude
His wish may soon obtain;
For friends will pass in various mood,
And leave him to his pain.
Then leave me to my woe!
And when no friend is near,
I shall have nought to fear,
Nor solitude shall know.

The lover soft with footstep light,
Alone would meet his dear,
And thus to me, by day and night,
Grief comes when none are near—
Grief comes when I'm alone,
But soon I shall cease to moan,
And in my silent grave
Rest I shall gladly crave,
Then I shall be alone.

We might indulge in much prolixity, and yet fail to express the delight which Wilhelm derived from his strange interview with this romantic stranger. The old man replied to every observation by melodies, which awoke every kindred feeling within his soul, and opened a wide field to his imagination.

Whoever has been present at a meeting of pious persons, who imagine that by separating from the Church, they can succeed in edifying each other in a purer, more cordial, and more spiritual manner, may form some idea of the present scene. He will remember how the leader has sought to adapt his words to the verse of some hymn, thus exalting the souls of his hearers to the point at which he has wished that they should take flight—how another of the congregation has in another tune introduced the verse of another hymn, and how even a third has acted in like manner, and thus, whilst the ideas of the appropriate hymns were suggested, each passage has by its new adaptation, become new and distinct, as if it were composed for that very occasion, by which means it has happened that from a familiar circle of ideas, as well as from familiar tunes and words, that particular society has enjoyed an original whole, by whose influence it has been at once charmed, strengthened, and refreshed. Thus did the old harper edify his guest. By means of new and strange songs and passages, he aroused in Wilhelm's bosom a train of feelings, new and old, and of impressions, which, whether sleeping or slumbering, pleasant or painful, excited the best hopes for the happiness of our friend.

CHAPTER XIV.

Upon his return he began to reflect more seriously than ever upon his situation, and he had reached home with the resolution of effecting his own rescue, when our host imparted to him in confidence that Mademoiselle Philina had achieved a conquest over the Stallmeister, and that the latter, after he had arranged his business at the estate, had returned

in great haste, and was now enjoying a good supper with her in her chamber.

Just at this instant Melina arrived, accompanied by the notary. They proceeded together to Wilhelm's apartment, where the latter, though with some reluctance, performed his promise, and paid down three hundred dollars to Melina who, handing them to the notary, received in return a docu-, ment confirming the sale of the whole theatrical apparatus, which was to be delivered to him on the following day.

Scarcely had they separated, when Wilhelm heard a cry of distress proceeding from the house. It was the voice of a youth, threatening and raging, interrupted, however, by violent weeping and lamentation. The noise came from above, penetrated to his apartment, and re-echoed from the court-yard.

Curiosity having induced our friend to follow the direction of the sound, he soon found Friedrich in a state bordering upon madness. He wept, gnashed his teeth, stamped, threatened with clenched fists, and seemed to have lost his reason from fury and vexation. Mignon was standing opposite to him, and looking on with surprise, while the host sought to explain the transaction.

The boy, it seemed, upon his return, had been well received by Philina. He was contented, merry, and cheerful, and had sung and skipped about until the time when the Stallmeister had become acquainted with her. The youth then commenced to shew his discontent, by slamming the doors violently, and by running about in a state of the greatest excitement. Philina had ordered him to wait at table that evening, whereupon he had become surly and impertinent, and finally, having to serve up a ragout, instead of placing it upon the table, he had overthrown it between Mademoiselle and her guest, as they were seated rather close together. The Stallmeister thereupon had boxed his ears soundly, and turned him out of doors. The host, in the meantime, had assisted to cleanse and arrange the dresses of the sufferers, which had been seriously injured by the accident.

When the youth learned that his revenge had proved so far successful, he burst into loud laughter, although the tears at the same time were coursing plenteously down his cheeks. He seemed for some time to be cordially de-

lighted, until a recollection of the insult he had suffered from his stranger antagonist, occurred to him again, whereupon he once more vented his fury in shouts and threatenings.

Wilhelm surveyed this scene with inward shame. It represented his own condition though in coarse and exaggerated characters. He knew that he was himself a prey to feelings of the most insatiable jealousy, and if a sense of decorum had not restrained him, he would willingly have displayed his rage, by assailing with spiteful malice the object of his affections, and challenging his hated rival to single combat. Indeed he could have crushed the whole crowd of spectators who seemed to have collected together for his vexation.

Laertes who had just come up and heard the story, wickedly encouraged the angry youth, as the latter vehemently insisted that the Stallmeister should give him satisfaction, and declared that as he himself had never borne an insult with impunity, if his antagonist should refuse to accept his challenge he would find some other means to be revenged.

Laertes was now quite in his element. He proceeded up stairs with the greatest seriousness to challenge the Stallmeister in the name of the youth.

"That is excellent," replied the former. "I could not have anticipated such a joke this evening." They went down stairs together, and Philina followed them. "My son," said the Stallmeister addressing Friedrich, "you are a brave young man and I shall not decline your challenge. But as there is so much disparity between us both in years and strength, and the affair may therefore prove a little dangerous, I propose that in place of other weapons, we take a pair of foils, we can rub the buttons with chalk, and whoever marks the other first, or makes the greater number of successful thrusts, shall be considered the conqueror and be treated by his antagonist with the best wine which the town can furnish."

Laertes decided that this proposal might be accepted, and Friedrich obeyed him as his teacher. The foils were produced, whereupon Philina took a seat and proceeded with her knitting, surveying the two combatants with the greatest composure.

The Stallmeister, who was a good fencer, was considerate enough to spare his antagonist, and allowed certain marks of chalk to appear upon his coat, whereupon they both embraced each other, and the wine was introduced. The Stallmeister inquired into Friedrich's parentage and history, and the latter related a story which he was accustomed to repeat, and with which we may perhaps at some other time make our readers acquainted.

This duel completed the picture which Wilhelm had drawn of his own condition. He felt that he would gladly have used not only a foil but a sword against the Stallmeister, although he knew that the latter was far his superior in the use of such a weapon. Yet he did not bestow a look upon Philina, he made no sign which could betray his feelings, and after he had quaffed a few glasses to the health of the combatants, he hastened to his apartment, where he became a prey to a thousand distressing reflections.

He thought of the time when his soul sustained by hope and earnest energy was borne aloft and rioted in the keenest enjoyments of every description as in its own proper element. It had become clear to him that he was now wandering in a tangled path, where in scanty measure he but tasted those delights which formerly he had quaffed in copious draughts. But he could not comprehend the nature of that engrossing want which had become the law of his existence, or how this want had been left unsatisfied, and had rather increased and been misdirected by the events of his life.

It can surprise no person therefore to learn that when Wilhelm thought over his condition with a view of extricating himself from the labyrinth in which he found himself, he fell into the greatest perplexity. He found no consolation in the reflection that his friendship for Laertes, his attachment to Philina, and his love for Mignon had too long detained him in one spot, and in one company, where he might indulge his favourite inclinations, gratify his secret wishes, and free from the entanglement of every earnest pursuit, dream away his very existence. He thought he possessed resolution enough to burst those ties and to depart at once if it were necessary. But he recollected

that he had only a short time before entered into a pecuniary transaction with Melina, and had become acquainted with that strange old harper, the mystery of whose existence he felt an insatiable desire to unravel. After many conflicting thoughts, he determined at length or fancied he had determined that even these circumstances should not restrain him. "I must go," he cried, "I must go." He flung himself into a chair and felt greatly moved. Mignon now entered, and asked if she should assist him to undress? She approached in silence, for she was deeply grieved at having been already so abruptly dismissed.

Nothing is more affecting than the first discovery of a love which has long been nourished in silence, the first sign of a fidelity which has been nurtured in secret, and in the hour of need becomes revealed to him who was previously unaware of its existence. The bud whose leaves had been so long firmly closed, had ripened at length, and Wilhelm's heart was never more open than now to the influence of tenderness and affection.

Mignon stood before him and observed his agitation. "Master!" she exclaimed, "if you are unhappy, what is to become of Mignon?" "Dear creature," he said, taking her hand, "you are also one of the sources of my sorrow; I must be gone." She looked into his eyes, which were glistening with restrained tears, and threw herself on her knees passionately before him. He continued to hold her hand, and she placed her head upon his knees, and remained quite silent. He played with her hair, and his heart glowed with tenderness towards her. For a long time she continued motionless. At length he perceived that she trembled, at first almost imperceptibly, and then with a violence which shook her whole frame. "What is the matter, Mignon?" he exclaimed. She raised her head and looked at him attentively; she then pointed to her heart, with a countenance which expressed a deep but secret pain. He raised her up; she fell upon his breast. He clasped her to his bosom, and kissed her. But she acknowledged his kindness by no soft pressure of the hand, or by any other token of affection. She held her own hand firmly to her heart, when suddenly she uttered a piercing shriek, and her whole frame shook with a violent and spasmodic action. She rose upon her

feet, and then fell down suddenly, as if she had all at once lost the power of her limbs. It was a fearful spectacle. "My child!" he exclaimed, as he raised her from the ground, and embraced her tenderly, "my child! what is the matter?" The trembling continued; it seemed to commence at her heart and to extend from thence to all her limbs, which were powerless and paralyzed, and she hung like a lifeless weight within his arms. He pressed her to his bosom, and bathed her with his tears. Suddenly she became rigid, like one who suffers from the most intense physical pain; but soon her frame seemed inspired with new energy, and she threw her arms wildly round Wilhelm's neck, and held him firmly, as it were in the pressure of a strong spring which has closed, whilst at the same moment a full tide of grief opened within her soul, and her tears flowed in copious torrents from her closed eyes into his bosom. He held her firmly. She continued to weep, and no tongue can express the silent eloquence of her tears. Her long hair had escaped from its restraint, and hung loosely around her, and it seemed as if she were about to dissolve in a ceaseless flood of tears. At length her limbs became again relaxed; she seemed to pour forth her very inmost soul, and in the confusion of the moment Wilhelm feared that she would disappear like an unearthly vision from his embrace. He held her, therefore, in a firmer grasp. "My child," he exclaimed again, "my child! you are mine, if that word can bring you any comfort. Yes, you are mine, I will be faithful to you, and never for sake you!" Her tears continued to flow. At length she was able to rise. Her face beamed with the light of a faint cheerfulness. "My father!" she cried, "you will not forsake me; you will continue to be a father to me, and I will be your child!"

The soft sound of the harp at this instant began to echo from the apartment. As the shades of evening closed around, the old man brought his sweetest songs as an offering to our friend, and still clasping the dear child tenderly in his arms, he enjoyed the delight of the purest and most indescribable happiness.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

KNOW'ST thou the land where the lemon tree blows—
Where deep in the bower the gold orange grows?
Where zephyrs from Heaven die softly away,
And the laurel and myrtle tree never decay?
Know'st thou it? Thither, oh! thither with thee,
My dearest, my fondest! with thee would I flee.

Know'st thou the hall with its pillared arcades,
Its chambers so vast and its long colonnades?
Where the statues of marble with features so mild
Ask, "Why have they used thee so harshly, my child?"
Know'st thou it? Thither, oh! thither with thee,
My guide, my protector! with thee would I flee.

Know'st thou the Alp which the vapour enshrouds,
Where the bold muleteer seeks his way thro' the clouds?
In the cleft of the mountain the dragon abides,
And the rush of the stream tears the rock from its sides;
Know'st thou it? Thither, oh! thither with thee,
Leads our way, father—then come, let us flee.

WHEN Wilhelm, on the following morning, searched for Mignon through the house, he was unable to find her; he was informed that she had already gone out with Melina, the latter having risen at an early hour to take possession of the wardrobe and of the other apparatus belonging to the theatre.

After the lapse of a few hours, Wilhelm heard the sound of music before his door. He fancied at first that the harper had returned, but he presently distinguished the notes of a cithern, accompanied by a voice which, as soon as the singing commenced, he recognised to be that of Mignon. Wilhelm opened the door, whereupon the child entered, and sang the song which we have given above.

The melody and expression delighted our friend extremely, although he was not able precisely to understand the words. He caused her to repeat and to explain the stanzas—upon which he wrote them down and translated them into German. But he could only faintly imitate the original turn of the various ideas. The pure simplicity of the thoughts disappeared as the broken phraseology in which they were expressed was rendered uniform, and as the connection of the various parts was thus restored. Moreover, it was impossible to convey any idea of the exquisite nature of the melody.

She commenced each verse in a solemn measured tone, as if she had intended to direct attention to something wonderful, and had some important secret to communicate. At the third line, her voice became lower and fainter—the words, "Know'st thou it?" were pronounced with a mysterious thoughtful expression, and the "Thither, oh, thither!" was uttered with an irresistible feeling of longing, and at every repetition of the words "Let us flee!" she changed her intonation. At one time she seemed to entreat and to implore, and at the next to become earnest and persuasive. After having sung the song a second time, she paused for a moment, and attentively surveying Wilhelm, she asked him, "Know'st thou the land?" "It must be Italy!" he replied, "but where did you learn the sweet little song?" "Italy!" observed Mignon thoughtfully, "if you are going thither, take me with you, I am too cold here." "Have you ever been there, darling?" asked Wilhelm—but Mignon made no reply, and could not be induced to converse further.

Melina, who now entered, observing the cithern, seemed pleased that it had been so quickly repaired. The instrument had been found amongst the theatrical property, but Mignon had entreated that she might be allowed to keep it, and had carried it to the old harper. She now displayed a degree of skill in its use, for which no one had previously given her credit.

Melina had already taken possession of the theatrical wardrobe, with all its appendages, and some members of the Town Council had promised to obtain permission for him to commence his performances without much loss of time. He

accordingly returned to his companions with a glad heart and cheerful countenance. He appeared to have been changed into a new personage—he had grown mild and polite, and was even engaging and attractive. He said he considered himself happy in being able to provide continuous occupation for his friends, who had hitherto been unemployed, and in embarrassed circumstances; but he felt sorry that he was not yet able to reward the excellent actors with whom fortune had provided him, according to their merits and talents, as he felt it was indispensable that he should in the first place discharge the debt which he owed to his generous friend, Wilhelm.

"I cannot express to you," said Melina to Wilhelm, "how deeply I appreciate the value of your friendship which has enabled me to undertake the direction of a theatre. When I first met you I was indeed in a strange predicament. You will, doubtless, remember how strongly I then expressed my aversion to the theatre, and yet, after my marriage, a love for my wife compelled me to seek for an engagement, as she expected to derive both pleasure and applause from such an occupation. I was, however, unsuccessful—that is, I could procure no constant employment—but by good fortune I came in contact with some men of business who needed the occasional assistance of persons skilful with the pen, conversant with the French language, and having some knowledge of accounts. Thus I supported myself for a time, and being adequately remunerated, I was enabled to procure many necessary articles of which I stood in need, and had no reason to feel ashamed of my position. But in a short time my patrons no longer required my services, they could give me no permanent employment; and my wife therefore became more and more anxious that I should resume my connection with the stage, though at present her condition is not the most favourable for her own personal display in public. But I trust that the undertaking, which you have enabled me to commence, will form a good beginning for myself and for my family, though whatever be the result, I feel that I shall be indebted to you alone for my future happiness."

Wilhelm heard these observations with pleasure, and the whole company of performers were sufficiently satisfied with

the promises of their manager; they were secretly overjoyed at their unexpected engagement, and were satisfied at first with a small salary, especially as most of them considered the event itself as a piece of extreme good fortune, which they could hardly have expected to occur. Melina lost no time in availing himself of the temper of his actors—he sounded each of them in private, and changed his tone according to each person's disposition, until, at last, they all agreed to enter into an agreement, without reflecting much upon the nature of the conditions; calculating that they might, under any circumstances, dissolve their contract at the expiration of a month.

The terms were now about to be reduced to writing, and Wilhelm was engaged in reflecting upon the performance with which he should first attract the public, when a courier suddenly arrived and announced to the Stallmeister that his lord and his suite were immediately expected—whereupon the horses were ordered out without delay.

A travelling carriage well packed with luggage soon drove up to the hotel, and two servants sprang nimbly from the box. Philina, according to her custom, was the first to make her appearance, and had taken her post at the door.

"Who are you?" inquired the Countess, as she entered the hotel.

"An actress, your Excellency!" was the reply, whilst the artful girl with a modest look and humble countenance, bowed obsequiously and kissed the lady's gown.

The Count, who observed some other persons standing near, and having learned that they were actors, made some inquiries about the strength of the company, their last place of residence, and the name of the manager. "Had they been a French company," he remarked to his wife, "we might have surprised the Prince with an unexpected pleasure, and provided him with his favourite entertainment."

"But it might, perhaps, be as well," observed the Countess, "to engage these people, though unfortunately they are only Germans, to perform at the castle, whilst the Prince remains with us. They cannot be wholly devoid of talent. A theatrical performance is the best possible amusement for a large company, and the Baron will not fail to support them."

So saying she ascended the stairs, and Melina soon ap-

peared before them as the manager. "Assemble your company of actors," said the Count, "place them before me, that I may see what is in them. Furnish me, moreover, with a list of the pieces they perform."

With a profound bow, Melina hastened from the apartment, and speedily returned with his company of actors. They advanced in confusion and disorder. Some of them were awkward from their great desire to please, and others were no better, from their air of assumed carelessness. Philina paid great respect to the Countess, who evinced the utmost possible condescension and kindness. The Count, meanwhile, was busily engaged in examining the whole body.

He questioned each of them about his peculiar qualities, admonished Melina, that he should be particular in confining every one to his own department; a piece of advice which the manager received with the greatest deference.

The Count then explained to each of the actors the precise point which he ought particularly to study, how he should seek to improve his action and his attitudes, showing clearly in what points the Germans were usually deficient, and exhibiting such profound knowledge of art, that they all stood around in deep humility, and scarcely dared to breathe in the presence of so brilliant a critic and honourable a patron.

"Who is that man in the corner?" inquired the Count, looking at a person who had not yet been presented to him. A lean figure approached, attired in a garb which had seen better days—his coat was patched at the elbows, and a sorry wig covered the head of the humble subject of inquiry.

This man, in whom from the last book of our story, we may recognise the favourite of Philina, was accustomed to act the character of pedants, of schoolmasters and poets, and usually to take those parts where a beating or a ducking was to be endured in the course of the entertainment. It was always his habit to bow in a certain obsequious, ridiculous and timid manner, and his faltering mode of speech was in complete unison with the characters he performed, and never failed to excite laughter. He was considered a useful member of the company, being upon all occasions active and ready to oblige. He approached the Count in his own peculiar style, saluted him, and answered every inquiry just

as he would have done upon the stage. The Count surveyed him for some time with attention and with pleasure, and then addressing the Countess, he exclaimed, "My child, observe this man particularly—I could lay a wager that he is an eminent actor at present, or at least that he is capable of becoming one." The man, hereupon, in the excess of his delight made a ridiculous sort of bow, at which the Count could not refrain from laughing, and observed, "He acts his part to perfection—this man can, doubtless, perform any character he pleases, and it is a pity that he has not hitherto been better employed."

An encomium so unusual was distressing to the other actors. Melina, however did not share the general feeling, but rather coincided with the Count. He said with a respectful look, "It is indeed too true, and both he and many of us have long needed the proper appreciation of so excellent a judge as we perceive your Excellency to be."

"Is the whole company present?" inquired the Count.

"Several members are absent," replied the artful Melina, "but if we could calculate upon receiving support we should soon be able to complete our company without going far."

During this time Philina remarked to the Countess, "There is a very handsome young man up stairs, who will doubtless soon become a first-rate amateur."

"Why does he not shew himself?" inquired the Countess.

"I will call him," answered Philina, and she immediately disappeared.

She found Wilhelm still engaged with Mignon, and she persuaded him to descend. He accompanied her with some reluctance, but curiosity induced him to comply, for having heard that some persons of rank had arrived, he was anxious to know something further about them. When he entered the apartment, his eyes at once encountered the look of the Countess, which was fixed upon him. Philina presented him to the lady whilst the Count in the meantime was engaged with the rest of the company. Wilhelm bowed respectfully, but it was not without embarrassment that he answered the various inquiries of the charming Countess. Her beauty and youth, her grace and elegance, as well as her accomplished manners, produced the most delightful impression upon him, especially as her conversation

and her looks were somewhat timid and embarrassed. Wilhelm was presented to the Count likewise, but the latter bestowed less attention upon him, but turning to the window where his lady was standing, he appeared to make some inquiries of her. It was easy to perceive that they agreed perfectly in opinion, and that she sought by her earnest entreaties to confirm him in his intentions, whatever they might be.

He turned soon afterwards to the company and said, "I cannot stay any longer at the present moment, but I will send a friend to you, and if you are moderate in your demands and will exert yourselves to the utmost, I have no objection that you should perform at the castle."

The whole company testified their joy at this announcement, and in particular Philina, who thereupon kissed the hand of the Countess with the greatest emotion. "See, little one!" said the Countess, at the same time patting the cheek of the light-hearted girl, "See, child, you must visit me again, I will keep my promise to you, but in the meantime you must dress yourself better." Philina observed by way of excuse, that she had not much money to spend upon her wardrobe, whereupon the Countess ordered her maid to give her an English bonnet and a silk handkerchief, articles which could be unpacked without difficulty. The Countess herself arranged them on Philina, who continued very cleverly both by her conduct and demeanour to support her claims to a saint-like sinless character.

The Count took his lady's hand and conducted her down stairs. As she passed the company she saluted them all in the most gracious manner, and turning to Wilhelm, she said to him in the kindest way, "We shall soon meet again."

The company felt cheered by these happy prospects, and each one allowed free scope to his hopes, to his wishes, and his fancies, suggested the character which he would like to perform, and spoke of the applause which he expected to receive. Melina in the meantime was considering whether he could not manage by means of a few hasty performances to extract a little money from the inhabitants of the town, and so to afford his company an opportunity for practising their parts. Some of the others in the meantime made their way to the kitchen, where they ordered a better dinner than they had lately been accustomed to enjoy.

CHAPTER II.

After a few days the Baron arrived, and Melina received him with some little trepidation. The Count had announced him as a critic, and the whole company apprehended that he might soon discover their inefficiency, and perceive that they were not a regular company of actors, as in point of fact they were scarcely able to perform a single play properly; but the fears of the manager and of the others were soon allayed upon finding that the Baron patronized the stage of his native land, and always gave a cordial welcome to every member of the profession. He saluted them with dignity, and expressed the happiness he felt in meeting so unexpectedly with a German company, in becoming connected with them, and in introducing the native Muses to the castle of his relative. He then drew a manuscript from his pocket, whereupon Melina fancied he was about to read the terms of the contract, but it turned out to be something of a wholly different nature. The Baron requested that they would listen attentively whilst he read to them a play of his own composing, which he was anxious they should perform. They at once formed a circle round him and seemed delighted at the prospect of so easily securing the friendship of so important a patron, but they could not help feeling a simultaneous shudder at the thickness of the manuscript. They had good reason for their apprehensions, for the play consisted of five acts, and every act seemed interminable.

The hero of the piece was distinguished for his virtue and generosity, but was a misunderstood and persecuted man, finally, however, he proved victorious over his enemies, from whom the strictest poetical justice would have been exacted if he had not pardoned them upon the spot.

During the rehearsal of this piece, each of the audience found occasion to reflect upon his own particular circumstances, to recover from his previous depression of spirits, and to experience a sensation of the happiest self-contentment at the pleasant prospects which were opening in the future. Those who found no characters in the piece adapted for themselves, silently condemned the composition, and considered the Baron as an unsuccessful author, whilst on the other hand, those who discovered an occasional passage

which they thought would elicit the applause of an audience, praised it in the most extravagant manner, and thus abundantly satisfied the vanity of the author.

The business was soon completed. Melina succeeded in concluding a most profitable engagement with the Baron, which he carefully concealed from the other members of the company.

In the course of conversation Melina mentioned Wilhelm's name to the Baron, described him as possessing qualities for dramatic composition and talents for succeeding as an actor. The Baron immediately sought Wilhelm's acquaintance as a colleague, and Wilhelm thereupon produced some small pieces of his own composition which with a few other trifles had escaped on that day when he had committed the greater part of his writings to the flames. The Baron praised not only the pieces, but Wilhelm's recitation of them, and he took it for granted that the latter would join the others in their visit to the castle, promising upon his departure that they should all experience the greatest hospitality, enjoy comfortable quarters, good fare, and receive an abundance of applause and of presents, to which Melina added the promise of a small pecuniary donation as pocket money.

We may conjecture how the spirits of the company were revived by this visit. All parties were relieved from the apprehension of poverty and misfortune, and they were restored to the hope of honour and enjoyment. They lost no time in practically realizing their expectations, and they all from that moment considered it discreditable to keep a single farthing in their purse.

Wilhelm was in the meantime considering with himself whether he ought not to accompany the others to the castle, and for more than one reason he determined to do so. Melina hoped that this advantageous engagement would enable him to pay off a part of his debt, and Wilhelm whose great object was to study mankind, felt unwilling to lose such an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the great world where he trusted to acquire so much experience of life in general, as well as of himself and of dramatic art. He was unwilling to admit his extreme desire to find himself once more in company with the beautiful Countess. He wished rather to impress upon himself the great value of

becoming acquainted with persons in an exalted sphere of life. His mind was filled with visions of the Count, the Countess, and the Baron, he thought of the ease, the grace, and the propriety of their manners, and when he found himself alone, he exclaimed with enthusiasm, "Happy, thrice happy they who are raised by their birth above the lower ranks of mankind, who never even in a transient manner experience those difficulties which oppress many good men during the whole course of their lives. From their exalted position their view is extensive and commanding, and each step of their progress in life is easy. From the moment of their birth they embark as it were in a ship, and in the voyage of life which we all have to make, they profit by the favourable breeze, and overcome the adverse gale, more fortunate than others, who are condemned to waste their strength in swimming, deriving no advantage from the prosperous wind, and who when the storm arises become exhausted, and miserably perish. What ease, what a natural grace is theirs, who are born to hereditary fortune! How secure is mercantile enterprise when established on the basis of a solid capital, when the failure of some chance speculations cannot reduce the whole to ruin. Who can better understand the value and the worthlessness of earthly things than he who has enjoyed them from his youth,—who can earlier train his spirit to the pursuit of the useful, the necessary, and the true, than he who is able to correct his errors at an age when his strength is fresh to commence a new career."

In such terms did Wilhelm congratulate the denizens of the higher regions, and not them only, but all who were privileged to approach their circle and to draw comfort from their fountain of refreshment. And he thanked his destiny for the prospect he saw before him of ascending to those spheres.

In the meantime Melina had taken much trouble to arrange the company according to the talents of each actor, that each might produce his proper effect. But when in pursuance of his own views and of the Count's commands, he had made many exertions for this purpose, he was obliged to feel satisfied when he came to execute his plans, with permitting the actors to take those parts for which they deemed themselves best adapted. In general therefore Laertes

played the lover, Philina the attendant, whilst the two young ladies divided between them the characters of artless tender maidens—but the boisterous old man played his part the best. Melina considered himself competent to act the cavalier, whilst his wife to her great disappointment was forced to content herself with the character of a young wife or an affectionate mother, and as the modern plays rarely introduce the poet or the pedant in a ridiculous point of view, the Count's favourite usually personated a president or a minister of state, and they were generally represented as knaves and severely handled in the fifth act. Melina also as chamberlain or chamberlain's assistant took pleasure in repeating the absurdities which some worthy German authors introduce into certain plays—he was partial to these characters, because they afforded him an opportunity for assuming a fashionable dress, and practising the airs of a courtier, which he fancied he could play with great perfection.

The company was soon joined by some other actors who arrived from different parts of the neighbourhood, and who were engaged without undergoing a very strict examination, and without having to submit to very burdensome conditions.

Wilhelm who had been more than once vainly entreated by Melina to perform as an amateur, evinced the greatest interest for the success of the enterprise, without however receiving the slightest recognition of his services from the new director. The latter indeed seemed to imagine that the assumption of his new office, imparted to him the necessary qualities for filling it properly. The task of abbreviating the performances seemed one of his most agreeable pursuits, and his skill herein enabled him to reduce any piece to the regular measure of time, without regarding any other consideration. He was warmly supported, the public seemed delighted, and the most refined classes in the town maintained that even the court theatre was not so well managed as theirs.

CHAPTER III.

The time arrived at length when it became necessary to prepare for their journey, and to expect the coaches and

carriages which were to convey them to the castle of the Count. Great were the difficulties which arose in arranging how they were to sit, and how the company should be divided. At length, after some trouble, the arranging and dividing was proposed and concluded, but alas, without effect! At the appointed hour fewer carriages came than had been expected, and they were forced to accommodate themselves as circumstances permitted. The Baron, who followed shortly afterwards on horseback, apologized for the inconvenience, by stating that the whole castle was in confusion, as the Prince was to arrive some days before the appointed time, and more guests had already come than had been expected, on this account therefore they might not perhaps be so well lodged as he had intended, a circumstance which overwhelmed him with grief.

They disposed themselves as well as they could in the carriages, and as the weather was favourable, and the castle only a few leagues distant, the most active of the company determined to set out on foot rather than await the return of the vehicles. The cavalcade started with a loud cheer, and for the first time in their lives they had no occasion to tremble for the landlord's bill. The Count's castle arose in their imagination like a fairy palace. They were in their own opinion the happiest beings in the world, and each individual fancied that this lucky day was the commencement of a long æra of happiness, prosperity, and honour.

A deluge of rain which fell most unexpectedly was unable to dissipate these blissful contemplations, but when the storm became still more violent, and seemed likely to continue, many of the company exhibited some symptoms of dissatisfaction. The night was coming on, and no object could be more welcome to them than the Count's palace, which beamed upon them from the summit of a hill at some distance, brilliantly illuminated in every story, so that all the windows could readily be counted.

Upon approaching nearer, they found that the side buildings were illuminated also, and each individual began to consider which chamber might possibly be destined for himself, but most of them were modestly contented with the prospect of occupying an apartment in the garrets or in one of the wings of the mansion.

They now drove through the village and passed the hotel. Here Wilhelm ordered the carriage to stop, as he wished to descend, but the landlord assured him that he could not afford the smallest accommodation. He said that the unexpected arrival of a large number of guests had obliged the Count to engage the entire hotel, and the doors of the apartments had been already inscribed in chalk with the names of the intended occupants. Wilhelm was therefore compelled reluctantly to proceed to the castle with the rest of the company.

Arrived there, they beheld a number of cooks busily engaged round a kitchen fire in one of the side buildings, and the sight revived their drooping spirits. A troop of servants carrying lights now appeared upon the steps of the main building, and the hearts of our worthy travellers glowed with satisfaction at the cheerful prospect. But who can describe their disappointment at finding themselves received with the rudest imprecations! The servants scolded the drivers for having come to this entrance. The latter were then directed to return and drive to the old castle, as there was no room there for such guests. The unkindness of this unexpected reception was increased by the jeering and derision of the servants, but the actors themselves smiled at their folly at having set out in the rain on so fruitless an expedition. It still poured in torrents. No star appeared in the heavens, and the company was now driven along a rough uneven road, between two high walls, to the old castle, which was situated at some distance behind the new one, and had remained uninhabited since the decease of the Count's father, by whom the latter had been built. The carriages drew up partly in the court-yard and partly under a long arched gateway, and the drivers who had been engaged in the neighbouring village, unharnessed their horses and rode away.

As no one appeared to welcome the travellers, they alighted and called out and searched about, but in vain. All was darkness and silence around. The wind blew in gusts through the high gate, and the old towers and courts looked grey and desolate, and were dimly distinguished in the surrounding gloom. The actors shivered with cold, the women trembled with fear, the children cried, and the

impatience of all parties momently increased, for this sudden and unexpected revolution in their happiness had completely disconcerted them.

In the constant expectation that some person would make his appearance to liberate them, and continually mistaking the sound of the rain and the howling of the storm for the approaching footstep of the castle steward, they remained for a considerable time anxious and inactive, for the idea never occurred to any of them to proceed to the new castle and implore assistance from compassionate souls. They were moreover unable to imagine what had become of their friend the Baron, and they were for all these reasons reduced to a most pitiable condition.

At length some individuals actually arrived and they were recognized by their voices as the pedestrians of the party who had lingered behind upon the road. They brought the information that the Baron had fallen from his horse and had hurt his foot severely, and stated that they themselves upon making inquiries at the castle had been rudely directed to their present quarters.

The whole party was soon in a state of the greatest perplexity, they consulted together as to the best course of proceeding, but they could decide upon nothing. At length they caught the glimmer of a lantern at a distance, which revived their spirits, but all hopes of effecting a speedy deliverance quickly vanished when the light approached them nearer. The lantern was borne by a servant who acted as guide to their friend the Stallmeister, and this latter personage, as soon as he had joined the party, inquired anxiously for Mademoiselle Philina. She immediately stepped out from amongst the others, and the Stallmeister thereupon begged urgently that he might conduct her to the new castle where comfortable accommodation had been prepared for her with the servants of the Countess. She did not waste much time in reflection, but accepted the offer gladly, seized his arm, and giving her trunk in charge to her companions, she was in the act of departing, when the others placed themselves in the way, begging, imploring, and beseeching the Stallmeister so urgently, that he in order to make his escape with Philina, promised everything they asked, and assured them that in a short time the castle should be thrown open, and

they should all be provided with comfortable quarters. Soon afterwards they saw the lantern disappear, and for a long time they looked in vain for another light, but it came at last after much delay and grumbling on their parts, and it inspired them with fresh hope and comfort.

An old servant opened the gate of the castle, and they all rushed forward with impatience. They now became anxious for the safety of their luggage, each being eager to have his own trunks uncorded and placed beside him. The greater part of it was like their own persons, thoroughly saturated with rain. As they had only one candle, their proceedings were necessarily tedious. They pushed against each other, they stumbled, and they fell. They begged for more light and that a fire might be provided. The servant listened in silence, and after much hesitation placing down his own lantern he disappeared and returned no more.

They now proceeded to examine the house, every door of which was wide open. Huge fire places, hangings of tapestry, and inlaid floors afforded evidence of former grandeur, but there were no remains of other furniture to be found, neither table nor chairs, nor looking-glass, only immense empty bedsteads from which everything useful and ornamental had been removed. The wet trunks and travelling bags were now converted into seats, some of the weary wayfarers contented themselves with lying on the floor, but Wilhelm had seated himself upon the stairs, and Mignon reclined upon his knees. The child was restless, and in reply to Wilhelm's questions, answered, "I am hungry." He had nothing with which to appease the wants of the child, his companions had consumed all their provisions, and he was obliged to leave the little creature without food. During the whole adventure he had remained silently buried in thought. He felt dissatisfied with himself, and sorry that he had not adhered to his first determination to alight at the hotel, even if he had been obliged to put up with the veriest garret.

All the others acted as they felt inclined. Some of them heaped together a quantity of old wood in one of the enormous chimneys, and they set fire to it amid cheering and loud huzzas. But they were sadly disappointed in their hopes of drying and warming themselves in this manner, for as the fireplace had been built for mere ornament, it was

closed at the top, and therefore the smoke rushed quickly back and filled the entire room. The dry wood crackled and burst into flames, but the flames were driven back, and as the draught of wind through the broken window gave them an unsteady direction, all parties trembled for the safety of the castle, and they were therefore obliged to disperse the burning faggots, and to quench them with their feet. The smoke by this means increased intolerably, and the situation of our friends was rendered well nigh desperate.

Wilhelm had taken refuge from the smoke in a room at some distance, whither Mignon soon followed him, accompanied by a well-dressed servant, who carried in his hand a large, brilliant double-lighted lantern. He turned to Wilhelm and respectfully offered him a tempting supply of fruit and confectionery upon a plate of the most beautiful porcelain. "The young lady sends you this," he said, "and requests that you will join her party. She is very comfortable," added the domestic with a knowing look, "and she wishes to share her enjoyment with her friends."

Wilhelm could not have anticipated such a mark of attention, for ever since the adventure on the stone seat, he had treated Philina with marked contempt, and he had so firmly made up his mind to hold no intercourse with her for the future, that he was in the act of refusing her dainty presents, when an imploring look from Mignon induced him to accept them. He therefore thanked her for them in the name of the child—but at the same time he utterly declined the invitation. He requested the servant to have some consideration for the wants of the company, and he made some inquiries for the Baron. The latter it seems was confined to his bed, but he had given orders, as the servant had been informed, that the wants of the company should be attended to.

The servant then took his departure, leaving one of his lights behind for Wilhelm's accommodation. In the absence of a candlestick, he was obliged to fasten it to the window-stool, and thus in his contemplations he could see at least that the four walls of his apartment were illuminated. In a short time preparations were completed for leading our travellers to repose. By degrees candles were brought, though without snuffers, then a few chairs, and after the

interval of about an hour some bed clothes arrived, and then the pillows, but everything was thoroughly drenched with rain. Finally, when it was long past midnight, the straw beds and mattresses appeared, which if they had been produced at an earlier hour, would have been cordially welcomed.

During these preparations, something to eat and to drink had also been provided. It was despatched without much criticism, though it was only a collection of disorderly fragments, and afforded no very strong proof of the respect which was entertained for our guests.

CHAPTER IV.

The distress and inconvenience of the night were much increased by the frolics and mischievous tricks of some members of the company. They woke and annoyed each other, and indulged in all kinds of practical jokes. On the following morning they uttered loud complaints against their friend the Baron for having imposed upon them, and for having so completely misrepresented the order, and comfort which they were to enjoy. But at an early hour to their great astonishment and delight the Count himself arrived, attended by a few servants, and made inquiries into their circumstances. He was much distressed upon learning how indifferently they had fared, and the Baron who limped along with the assistance of a servant, blamed the house-steward for disobeying his commands, and declared that the latter had merited the most exemplary punishment.

The Count at once commanded that everything should be instantly arranged for the utmost convenience of his guests. In the meantime some young officers arrived, who sought the acquaintance of the actresses, and the Count calling the whole company before him, addressed each of them by name, and as he introduced some jokes into his conversation, all parties seemed delighted with the condescension of their gracious Lord. At length Wilhelm appeared in his proper turn, holding Mignon by the hand. He apologized for his freedom in appearing before the Count, but the latter assured him that his visit was expected.

A gentleman, who stood near the Count, and who was said to be an officer, although he wore no uniform, entered into close conversation with Wilhelm, and attracted general attention. His large blue eyes shone with great clearness from beneath his noble brows, his light brown hair was thrown carelessly back, his middle stature and whole appearance gave indication of a bold, firm, and decisive character. His questions were earnest, and he seemed perfectly to understand the subject of his inquiries.

Wilhelm asked the Baron who he was, but the latter was not able to say much in his favour. He held the rank of Major, was a special favourite with the Prince, managed all his private affairs, and was regarded as his right hand; indeed there was reason to believe that he was the Prince's natural son. He had filled the post of ambassador in England, France, and Italy, where he had always been distinguished, and had thus become conceited. He believed himself to be thoroughly acquainted with German literature, and was accustomed to indulge in all sorts of jests upon it. The Baron, avoided his society, and he advised Wilhelm to do the same, as he never failed to prove a disagreeable acquaintance. He was called Jarno, though nobody well understood what was meant by such a name.

Wilhelm knew not what to reply to all this, for notwithstanding that there was something cold and disagreeable in the manner of the stranger, he felt a sort of secret liking for him.

The company was now accommodated in the castle, and Melina gave strict orders that they should conduct themselves with decorum, that the women should reside in separate apartments, and that they should all devote their individual attention to the drama, and to the study of their particular characters. He drew up a list of orders and regulations, arranged under different heads, which he fastened upon all the doors. The precise amount of every fine was settled, and every transgressor was ordered to pay the same into a common fund.

But these regulations were but little regarded. Young officers came in and went out, joking rudely with the actresses, deriding the actors, and destroying the whole system of police before it had time to take root. The people

chased each other through the apartments, changed clothes, and dressed in various disguises. Melina, who was stern at first towards some of the offenders, became exasperated at their incessant insolence, and when the Count sent for him to survey the place where he wished the theatre to be erected, the confusion increased tenfold. The young men practised all sorts of coarse buffoonery, which was made worse by the suggestions of the actors, and the old castle looked in fact as if it had been abandoned to the rioting of an infuriate mob, and the scandal did not cease till the hour of dinner arrived.

The Count had conducted Melina into a large apartment, which though it formed part of the old castle, was connected by a gallery with the new building, and seemed well adapted for the construction of a small theatre. Here the clever proprietor of the mansion explained the manner in which he wished everything to be arranged.

The work now commenced with the greatest vigour. The stage was erected and ornamented with such decorations as the company had brought along with them, and the whole was completed by some skilful workmen of the Count's. Wilhelm took part in the preparations, assisted in the arrangement of the perspective, sketched the scenery, and was extremely anxious that everything should be correctly done. The Count who was frequently present, expressed great satisfaction with all the arrangements, occasionally directing the operations in person, and affording proofs of his intimate acquaintance with every branch of the art.

A zealous practice of the rehearsals was now commenced, and for this undertaking they would have found space and leisure enough, if they had not been interrupted by the constant interference of strangers. For new visitors arrived at the castle daily, and they were all anxious in turn to inspect the preparations of the company.

CHAPTER V.

For some days past, the Baron had amused Wilhelm with the prospect of receiving a regular introduction to the Countess. "I have already," he said, "told this charming

lady so much about your talented and sentimental compositions, that she is quite anxious to see you, and to hear some of them recited. Hold yourself in readiness therefore to wait upon her at the shortest notice, as you may depend upon receiving an invitation the first morning the Countess shall find herself disengaged." He thereupon selected an afterpiece which he recommended him to read over, in order that he might completely win her favour. The lady, he assured him, regretted extremely that he had arrived at so inconvenient a time, and that he had been compelled to share with the rest of the company, the many inconveniences of the old castle.

Wilhelm thereupon carefully prepared the piece with which he was to make his entrance into the great world. "Hitherto," he observed, "you have laboured in silence for yourself, satisfied with the approbation of a few chosen friends. You have long despaired of your own talents, and are not yet free from doubt whether you have chosen a proper career, and whether your ability equals your passion for the stage. In the presence of such correct judges, in the closet where no illusion enters, the attempt must be more hazardous than elsewhere, and yet I would not willingly shrink from the effort to enjoy this triumph also, and to enlarge the prospect of my hopes for the future."

He thereupon examined several pieces carefully, perused them with attention, corrected them here and there, recited them aloud, in order to perfect himself in the proper mode of delivery and expression, and then selecting the play which pleased him best, and from which he hoped to derive the greatest honour, he put it into his pocket one morning, upon receiving an invitation to appear before the Countess.

The Baron had assured him that no one would be present save one female companion. When he entered the apartment, the Baroness von C—— received him with quiet suavity, expressed her gratification at making his acquaintance, and introduced him to the Countess, who was at that moment in the hands of the hairdresser. The Countess herself received him with friendly words and gracious looks, but Wilhelm was mortified to observe Philina kneeling at her side and practising all sorts of follies. "The sweet child," said the Baroness, "has been singing for us. Finish

the ballad," she continued, turning to Philina, "which you had commenced, we should not like to lose it."

Wilhelm listened to the conclusion of the song with the greatest patience, whilst he wished sincerely that the hairdresser should depart before the commencement of his recitation. He was invited to take a cup of chocolate, and the Baroness herself handed him a biscuit. But he could not enjoy his repast. He felt too anxious to commence his recitations to the beautiful Countess, in hopes that he might interest her and give her pleasure. Moreover, he found Philina in his way—as she had not unfrequently proved a troublesome attendant at his recitals. He watched the progress of the hairdresser with impatience, hoping that every moment would witness the completion of his task.

The Count now entered, and gave an account of the guests whose arrival was to-day expected, talked over the arrangements which had been made for the day's amusement and of various other household matters. Upon taking his departure several officers, who were about to leave the castle at an early hour, requested permission to pay their respects to the Countess. The chamberlain having made his appearance, the gentlemen were admitted.

The Baroness, meanwhile, exerted herself to entertain our friend and paid him much attention, he accepted the proffered civilities with great respect, though not without betraying considerable absence of mind. More than once he felt in his pocket for his manuscript, and hoped that every moment would terminate his suspense. He was on the point of losing all patience, when a man-milliner was announced, who commenced opening his bags and band-boxes, without mercy, and pressing his various goods upon the company with an earnestness peculiar to that race of beings.

The company now increased. The Baroness looked at Wilhelm, and addressed the Countess in an undertone. He noticed the circumstance, though he could not understand its meaning. But the mystery was explained, when after an hour of painful profitless delay, he reached his home, and found in his pocket a handsome portfolio of foreign manufacture. It had been secretly placed there by the Baroness, and soon afterwards the Countess's little black servant arrived and delivered a parcel containing an embroidered waistcoat, but did not say distinctly by whom it had been sent.

CHAPTER VI.

Mingled feelings of gratitude and vexation destroyed the remainder of the day, but towards evening, Wilhelm once more found employment, as Melina informed him that the Count had spoken of a little play which he wished to have acted in honour of the Prince upon the day of his arrival. It was his wish, that the high qualities of so noble a hero, and so great a friend to mankind, should be personified and introduced into a Drama. It was his wish, that all these Virtues should appear together, should recite the praises of their patron, and finally crown his bust with a garland of flowers and laurels, whilst at the same time, a transparency should exhibit his illuminated name, in conjunction with the princely hat. The Count had commissioned Melina to superintend the versification, as well as the general arrangement of the piece, and the latter had expressed a hope, that Wilhelm, to whom such matters were easy, would contribute his assistance.

"How!" exclaimed Wilhelm, with emotion, "can we produce nothing better than portraits, illuminated names and allegorical figures, in honour of a Prince, who, in my opinion, is entitled to a much higher tribute of distinction? How can it possibly gratify a sensible man to see himself set up in effigy, and to behold his name shining through a sheet of oiled paper? I fear much, that in the present state of our wardrobe our allegories may give rise to sundry equivocal jests. I can have no objection that you should compose a play, or order one to be prepared, but I beg that I may not be asked to interfere in the matter."

Melina excused himself by observing, that the Count had mentioned the subject quite casually, and that he would doubtless leave the arrangements of the piece entirely to themselves. "With all my heart then," replied Wilhelm, "I will contribute my assistance for the gratification of so illustrious a family, and my Muse has never had a more delightful task than to celebrate, however inadequately, the praises of a Prince, who is entitled to the highest honour. I will think the matter over, and, perhaps, I may be able so to manage our little company as to produce some decided effect."

From this moment Wilhelm set zealously to work. Before he closed his eyes he had arranged every thing in proper order. Early on the following morning his plan was ready, the scenes were sketched out, and even some of the principal passages and songs were actually composed and reduced to writing.

Wilhelm then hastened to the Baron, in order to lay his plan before him, and to consult him upon certain points. The Baron was delighted, but nevertheless evinced no little surprise, for he had heard the Count on the previous evening allude to a piece of a wholly different nature, which he had ordered to be prepared and versified.

"It is not probable, I think," said Wilhelm, "that the Count intended that the piece should be prepared precisely as he proposed it to Melina. I can scarcely be wrong in presuming, that he merely wished to indicate to us the direction we should follow. Amateurs and critics just shew the artist what they desire, and then commit to him the execution of the work."

"Not at all," replied the Baron, "the Count insists, that the piece shall be composed precisely as he has directed. Your play, it is true, corresponds in some slight degree with his idea, but if we mean to succeed, in diverting the Count from his own project, we must have recourse to the ladies for that purpose. The Baroness is especially skilful in such matters. The point to consider is this, whether she likes the plan so well as to undertake the task, for if so she will infallibly succeed."

"But under any circumstance," observed Wilhelm, "we shall require the assistance of the ladies, for neither our company nor our wardrobe are sufficient without them. I can procure the attendance of some pretty children, who frequent the house, and who belong to the families of the servants."

He now requested the Baron to acquaint the ladies with his plan. The Baron soon returned, and stated, that the ladies wished to speak with Wilhelm personally. It was accordingly arranged that, in the evening, when the gentlemen should be engaged at play, which it was expected, would be deeper than usual, on account of the arrival of a certain General, the ladies should feign indisposition, and retire to

their private apartments, and that Wilhelm should then be introduced by a secret staircase, and unfold the nature of his plan. This air of mystery would clothe the adventure with an unspeakable charm, and the Baroness felt as happy as a child, at the prospect of a rendezvous, especially as it was all arranged in secret, and undertaken in opposition to the wishes of the Count.

Towards evening, at the appointed hour, Wilhelm was sent for, and cautiously introduced. The manner in which the Baroness permitted him to enjoy this private interview in her little cabinet, reminded him for a moment of former happy moments, and of bygone scenes. She led him to the chamber of the Countess, and they commenced to ask questions, and to seek for information. Wilhelm unfolded his plan with great warmth and eagerness, the ladies were quite enchanted with it, and our readers will therefore permit us to make them acquainted briefly with its outline.

The play was to commence with a dance of some children in a country scene. Each dancer had to wheel round in turn, and to take the place of his predecessor. The dancing was to be varied with other amusements, till finally the whole party dancing together in a circle, were to join in a merry song. At this moment the harper was to appear with Mignon, and thus the public curiosity becoming excited, the country people should collect together. The old harper was thereupon to sing various songs in honour of peace, repose and joy, and Mignon was then to wind up the whole entertainment with the egg-dance.

These harmless delights were now to be interrupted by sounds of martial music, and the company were to be surprised by a troop of soldiers. The men, thereupon, defend themselves and are overcome, the women fly, but are overtaken and brought back. A general tumult ensues, and the whole scene is in disorder, when a stranger enters (about whose person and precise qualities the poet has not yet made up his mind) and conveying the intelligence that the General is at hand, succeeds in restoring order. The character of the Hero is now painted in the brightest colours, security is established amid the din of arms, and violence and tumult are restrained. A public festival is proclaimed in honour of their generous deliverer.

The ladies were quite pleased with the plan, but they considered the introduction of some allegorical scene to be indispensable to satisfy the Count. The Baron suggested, that the leader of the soldiers should be represented as the Genius of Discord and Violence, and that Minerva should be introduced to bind him in fetters, to announce the arrival of the Hero, and to celebrate his praise. The Baroness undertook the task of assuring the Count, that the piece was the very same which he had proposed, with some few alterations, but she positively insisted, that at the conclusion of the performance, the bust, the illuminated name, and the princely hat should be introduced, as otherwise her interference would be in vain.

Wilhelm, who had already conceived in fancy how gloriously he would celebrate the praises of his Hero by the mouth of Minerva, after long resistance yielded up the point: but he felt that he had been delightfully subdued. The beautiful eyes of the Countess, and her captivating manners would easily have constrained him to abandon his duty as a poet, to lose sight of the neatest and most interesting plot, to forget the very unity of his composition, and all the most indispensable details. But as a member of society, his conscience had to sustain a still harder trial, when, upon the distribution of the characters, the ladies insisted positively that he should take a part.

To Laertes had been assigned the character of the violent God of war. Wilhelm was to be the leader of the country people, and he had to recite some very pithy sentimental verses. After having resisted for a time, he felt compelled at length to yield, indeed he was left wholly without excuse, for the Baroness assured him, that their theatre at the castle was of a strictly private nature, and that she herself would willingly perform, if a suitable occasion should offer. The ladies now took leave of Wilhelm in the kindest manner. The Baroness assured him that he was an incomparable youth, and accompanying him to the private staircase, she wished him good night with a soft pressure of the hand.

CHAPTER VII.

Encouraged by the lively interest which the ladies took in the proceedings, the play now assumed a distinct form, as the mere act of describing its plan had rendered Wilhelm's own conception of it clearer. He passed the greater part of the night and of the following morning in carefully arranging the versification of the dialogue and songs.

He had already made some progress when he received an invitation to proceed to the new castle, and was informed, that the family, who were at breakfast, wished to speak with him. Upon entering the apartment the Baroness advanced towards him, and pretending to bid him good morning, she whispered to him privately, "Say nothing of your play, unless you are questioned about it."

"I understand," exclaimed the Count, addressing him, "that you are most industrious, and that you are engaged in composing my play, which is to be represented in honour of the Prince. I quite approve of your introducing the character of Minerva, and I was just now considering how the Goddess should be clothed, in order that we may not offend against the proprieties of costume. I have, therefore, commanded all the books to be brought from my library, in which her figure is represented."

At this very moment some servants entered the apartment, carrying several huge baskets filled with books of every description.

Montfaucon, collections of antique statues, gems and coins, and every species of mythological writing, were all examined in turn, and the engravings compared. But even this was not enough. The accurate memory of the Count recalled every picture of a Minerva which was to be found in a title page, a vignette, or in any other place. Book after book was now brought in succession from the library, till the Count saw himself at length enthroned amid a countless collection of volumes, and finding that he could recollect no other figure of Minerva, he exclaimed with a smile, "I would lay a wager now that there is not a Minerva left in the whole library, and I suppose it is the first time that a collection of books has been deprived of the protection of their Patron-goddess."

The whole company smiled at the idea, and Jarno, who had all along been inciting the Count to send for more books, laughed quite immoderately.

"And now," said the Count, addressing Wilhelm, "it is of some importance to know which Goddess you really mean, Minerva or Pallas? The Goddess of War, or the Patroness of the Arts?"

"Might it not be more prudent, your Excellency," answered Wilhelm, "if we were not clearly to express ourselves upon this point, and as the Goddess plays a double part in mythology, to exhibit her here in a two-fold character. She introduces a warrior, but only for the purpose of appeasing the people; she honours a hero by exalting his humanity, she subdues violence, and restores peace and happiness to a nation."

The Baroness, who trembled lest Wilhelm might betray himself, now pushed forward the Countess's milliner, to explain the best mode of arranging a costume after the manner of the antique. This person, who was skilful in making masquerade dresses, at once settled the question, and as Madame Melina, notwithstanding her advanced pregnancy was to assume the character of the celestial virgin, the milliner was ordered to take her measure, and the Countess, somewhat reluctantly, specified to her servants the precise garments which were to be taken from her wardrobe, and cut up for the purpose.

At this juncture the Baroness contrived cleverly to call Wilhelm aside, when she assured him, that she had provided every thing else that was requisite. She had sent the musician to him, who had the direction of the Count's band, that he might either compose the necessary pieces, or select appropriate melodies from the general stock. Everything was now proceeding prosperously, the Count ceased to inquire about the piece, and employed himself chiefly with the transparency, with which he was determined to astonish the spectators at the conclusion of the performance. His own power of invention, and the skill of his confectioner, succeeded in producing a very effective design. During his travels he had witnessed the very best exhibitions of the kind, he had, moreover, examined a host of engravings and drawings, and he possessed considerable taste in all such matters.

Wilhelm in the mean time concluded his play, distributed the various parts, and made a selection of his own, and the musician, who was versed in dancing, undertook the preparation of a ballet, and all the arrangements promised to prove successful.

But an unexpected obstacle arose which threatened to prove fatal to the intended performance. Wilhelm had expected that Mignon's egg-dance would produce a striking effect, and he was much astonished therefore, when the child, with her accustomed dignity of manner, refused to perform, assuring him that she had resolved never to appear again upon the stage. He sought to influence her by every species of expostulation, and only ceased, when, with bitter tears, the child flung herself at his feet exclaiming, "Dearest father! abstain also from the stage yourself." But he paid no attention to the remark, and employed himself in studying by what other contrivance he could render the performance interesting.

Philina who had been chosen to act as one of the peasant girls, as well as to sing a solo, and to lead the chorus, felt quite delighted with the arrangement. In every respect her wishes were fully gratified. She had an apartment to herself, she was constantly in the society of the Countess, whom she amused with her frivolities, and from whom she was perpetually receiving presents.

A new dress had been expressly made for her to wear in the play, and as she was of a light and imitative nature, her late introduction to ladies' society had enabled her to observe such traits in their conduct as it would become her to adopt, and her manners had therefore lately assumed an air of refinement.

The attentions of her friend the Stallmeister increased rather than diminished, and as her society was coveted by the officers, and she was now breathing a new atmosphere, she determined henceforth to play the part of a prude, and to conduct herself with some attention to the rules of discretion and propriety. Cool and penetrating as she was, in the course of a week she understood the weaknesses of all around her, and if she could have acted with any firmness of purpose, she might have made her fortune. But in this instance, as in every other, she employed her advantages for her mere

amusement, to earn a happy day, and to practise her impertinences whenever she found that she could do so with impunity.

The several parts having been learnt, a rehearsal of the play was now ordered, at which the Count was expected to be present, and the Countess began to feel much anxiety for its success. The Baroness summoned Wilhelm to her privately, and the nearer the hour approached the greater was the embarrassment of all parties, for of the Count's original conception scarcely one solitary fragment had been retained. Jarno, who now arrived, was informed of the dilemma. He laughed heartily at the general perplexity, but promised to help the ladies by every means in his power. "It will be unfortunate," he observed, "if you cannot escape from this embarrassment, but at all events I will be on the watch to render you assistance." The Baroness informed him that she had already recited the entire play to the Count, but in detached and separate portions, she thought therefore he would be prepared for each individual passage, though he would undoubtedly expect that the whole should correspond with his original idea: "But," she added, "I will sit near him at the rehearsal this evening, and endeavour to distract his attention. I have ordered the confectioner to make the decorations with which the piece is to conclude, as splendid as possible, but they are not quite ready."

"In a certain Court, that I am acquainted with," observed Jarno, "we want a few zealous and prudent friends like you. However if your plans do not succeed this evening, give me a signal, and I will take out the Count and not allow him to return before the entrance of Minerva, and then the illuminations will soon come to our relief. For some days past, I have had something important to communicate to him, relative to his cousin, which for good reasons, I have hitherto postponed. This I know will distract his attention, in a manner not the most agreeable."

Some engagements of business prevented the Count from being present at the commencement of the rehearsal, the Baroness amused him subsequently, and Jarno's assistance was not needed. For as the Count was fully employed in making remarks as well as in suggesting alterations and improvements, his mind was thus completely employed, and

as Madame Melina entered soon afterwards, and spoke in a way that pleased him, and as moreover the transparency succeeded admirably, he was perfectly content. But when all was over and the card-playing was about to commence, the difference appeared to strike him, and he began to inquire whether the piece was really his own invention. A hint from the Baroness soon brought Jarno to the rescue, the evening passed over pleasantly, the news of the Prince's arrival was confirmed; some of the people rode out to see his body-guard encamp in the neighbourhood; the house became full of noise and confusion, and our actors, who had never been very diligently attended by the unwilling servants, resumed their former quarters in the old castle, where without attracting any particular attention, they passed their time in expectations and in practising their parts.

CHAPTER VIII.

At length the Prince arrived. The Generals with their staff officers and numerous suite, who came at the same time, and the crowds of people who were attracted by business or pleasure, made the castle resemble a bee-hive which is about to swarm. Every one pressed forward to obtain a sight of so distinguished a Prince; every one admired his kindness and condescension, and every one expressed his admiration at observing that he who was the greatest hero and general of the day, should be at the same time, the most refined and accomplished courtier.

All the inhabitants of the castle were directed by the Count to be in their places upon the arrival of the Prince. No actor was allowed to shew himself, for it had been determined that the Prince should be surprised by the spectacle prepared for his reception, and therefore, when at evening he entered the large hall, which had been brilliantly illuminated and decorated with tapestry of the preceding century, he was not at all prepared for a theatrical entertainment, still less for a drama in honour of himself. Every thing went off admirably, and at the end of the performance, the actors were presented to the Prince; who, in the most friendly

manner, managed to put some question or to make some kind observation to each. Wilhelm, as the author, received particular attention, and upon him a full portion of applause was generously bestowed.

After the play was concluded, no one made any further inquiry about it. In a few days it seemed as if it had never been performed, save that Jarno in his occasional conversations with Wilhelm, praised it warmly, but always added, "It is a pity that you should play with hollow nuts, to win a stake of hollow nuts."—For several days these words made an impression upon Wilhelm's mind; he was at a loss to explain them, or to know what to infer from them.

In the mean time the company continued to act every night, and exerted their best abilities to win the favour of the spectators. They were encouraged by applauses which they did not deserve, and in their old castle they verily believed that they were the real attraction of the crowd, that their performances had drawn together the multitude of strangers; and in short, that they were the central point around which every thing moved and revolved.

But to his great vexation, Wilhelm thought the very reverse of all this. For though the Prince had most conscientiously sat out the first representation from the beginning to the end, yet he gradually found that he could dispense with such amusements. And all those persons whose conversation Wilhelm had ever found to be most instructive, with Jarno at their head, now spent but a few moments in the theatre, passing the rest of their time in the ante-room, apparently engaged in play, or in business conversations.

It distressed Wilhelm grievously that his persevering exertions should fail to win their deserved and wished for reward. In selecting the plays, in copying the parts, in attending rehearsals, and in other numerous details, he zealously assisted Melina, who being secretly aware of his own incompetence, allowed Wilhelm to take the management. The latter committed his own parts accurately to memory, and performed them with earnestness and feeling and with as much propriety as his limited training and practice allowed.

The unceasing interest which the Baron took in their performances was perfectly satisfactory to the rest of the company. He assured them that their acting was most effective,

particularly when they performed a play of his composition. He only lamented that the Prince should display so strong a partiality for the French theatre, while on the other hand, a part of his people, amongst whom Jarno was the principal, passionately preferred the monstrosities of the English stage.

But if our actors failed to be adequately appreciated for their artistic qualities, the audience of both sexes were not wholly indifferent to the charms of their persons. We have already observed, that from the very commencement the actresses had attracted the attentions of the young officers, but in process of time they were even more fortunate, and succeeded in making far more important conquests. But we shall be silent on such subjects, only observing, that Wilhelm daily became more and more interesting to the Countess, and that a secret partiality for her began gradually to spring up within his bosom. She was unable to take her eyes from him during his performances, and he seemed to act, and to recite with all his thoughts intently fixed on her. Merely to behold each other afforded them unutterable delight, a feeling to which they yielded up their guileless souls, without encouraging a bolder wish, or reflecting upon any ulterior consequence.

As across the river which divides them, two hostile outposts will converse together pleasantly and happily, without reflecting upon the war in which their countries are engaged, so across the wide chasm of birth and station did the Countess exchange expressive looks with Wilhelm, and both believed that they might innocently indulge such emotions.

The Baroness meanwhile had made acquaintance with Laertes, who, being a lively, jovial youth, amused her extremely, and much as he disliked woman's society, had no disinclination for a passing adventure, and, in truth, in this instance he would have been ensnared in spite of his resolution, by the courtesy and attraction of the Baroness, if the Baron by chance had not rendered him a lucky or unlucky service, by making him somewhat better acquainted with the disposition of the lady.

Upon one occasion when Laertes praised her loudly, and professed that he preferred her beyond all others of her sex, the Baron answered with a smile, "I see plainly how it is,

our fair friend has now another victim ready for her stall." This unfortunate figure which bore too distinct a reference to the dangerous endearments of Circe pained Laertes beyond measure, and it was not without vexation that he heard the Baron continue to express himself with severity.

"Every stranger thinks he is the first who has won her flattering attentions, but he sadly mistakes, for we have all travelled the same road once. Man, youth, or boy, whoever he may be, must, for a time, become devoted to her, depend upon her favours, and pine for her affection."

The happy being who has been admitted into the garden of an enchantress, and revels in the enjoyment of all the delights of an artificial spring season, can experience nothing more repulsive than to hear the grunt of one of his transformed predecessors at the very moment when his ear is enraptured with the sweet song of the nightingale.

Laertes blushed deeply upon making this discovery, that his vanity should have again induced him to entertain a favourable opinion of any woman whatsoever. He therefore abandoned her society, and attached himself to the Stallmeister, with whom he now perpetually fenced and hunted, frequenting the rehearsals and representations, as if they were matters of no importance.

The Count and Countess would occasionally invite some of the company to their apartments, and upon such occasions the latter never failed to envy the unmerited good fortune of Philina. The Count, too, would sometimes detain his favourite, the Pedant, for hours together at his toilette. He had become, by degrees, a well-dressed individual, and was at length completely equipped and provided even to a watch and snuff-box.

Sometimes, especially after dinner, the company were summoned into the presence of their distinguished patrons. They were proud of so high an honour, but failed to observe, that upon the same occasions the dogs were brought in by the huntsmen, and the horses were led out for display in the courtyard of the castle.

Wilhelm had been advised warmly to praise the Prince's favourite author Racine, in order thereby to win a good opinion for himself. He accordingly availed himself of an opportunity for this purpose, when, upon a certain afternoon

he had received an invitation with some others. The Prince inquired whether he had carefully studied the works of the great French dramatists, to which Wilhelm eagerly responded in the affirmative. He did not observe that the Prince, without waiting for his reply, turned immediately away to address some other person. But Wilhelm, interrupting him, prevented this intention, and assured the Prince that he had the highest esteem for the French theatre, and that he had read the works of the great masters with the warmest delight—and had heard with real pleasure that his Highness never failed to render justice to the incomparable talents of Racine. "I can easily imagine," he continued, "how persons of high rank and lofty station must prize a poet, who has so well and truly painted the circumstances of their eminent position. Corneille drew the characters of great men, so to speak, Racine the characters of exalted personages. When I read his works, I never fail to think of the poet, residing in a brilliant palace, with a mighty monarch always before him, associating with the nobles, and penetrating the dark secrets of human nature, as they are concealed behind the rich and gaudy tapestry of courts. In studying Britannicus and Berenice, it seems as if I were myself a resident at the court of monarchs, as if I understood all the great and trivial concerns which belong to the dwellings of those earthly deities, the keen vision of the great French writer becomes mine, I behold kings revered by a mighty nation, courtiers envied by thousands of their fellows, in their natural forms, with all their faults and failings. The anecdote that Racine died of a broken heart, because Lewis the fourteenth refused to receive him and treated him with displeasure, affords the key to all his writings, and it seems to me impossible that a poet of such incomparable talents, whose very existence and death depended upon the favour of his king, could do otherwise than compose works entitled to the praise of a Monarch and a Prince."

Jarno was standing near, and he listened to our friend with astonishment. The Prince, who had made no reply, but merely signified his assent by an approving smile, turned aside, although Wilhelm, who seemed unaware that it was a breach of etiquette under present circumstances to continue the discourse, and to exhaust his subject, would gladly have pursued his observations, and convinced the Prince that he

had read his favourite author with no less profit than delight.

"Have you never read one of Shakspeare's plays?" inquired Jarno, leading him aside.

"No," answered Wilhelm, "since the time when they became popular in Germany, I have been little connected with the stage, and I know not whether I ought to congratulate myself now that my former taste and occupation has been renewed. But from what I have heard of those productions, I have no desire to become acquainted with such extraordinary exaggerations, which are in utter defiance of all probability and propriety."

"I should advise you, however, to make a trial of them, it cannot injure you to see even what is wonderful with your own eyes. I will lend you a volume or two, and you cannot employ your time better than by giving up every other pursuit, and in the solitude of your own chamber looking into the magic lantern of that unknown world. It is a pity for you to waste your time in dressing out these human apes, and teaching dogs to dance. I make but one condition, that you do not condemn the form of the plays, the rest I leave to your own good judgment and feeling."

The horses were at the door, and Jarno mounted with some cavaliers, to enjoy the delights of hunting. Wilhelm surveyed him with sadness. He would have gladly entered into further conversation with this man, who had already, although in a somewhat harsh manner, opened to him a store of new ideas, ideas too of which he had stood in need.

It often happens, that when the powers, or talents, or ideas of a man are being developed, he finds himself in a perplexity, from which a sensible friend might easily deliver him. He is like a traveller who falls into the water, when close to the inn at which he means to rest: should any one then seize him, and draw him out, all is right, at the cost perhaps of a good wetting, but if on the other hand, he is left to himself, and he should escape at all, it will probably be at the wrong side of the river, and he has then to make a wide and weary circuit to reach his destination.

Wilhelm began now to suspect, that things in the world went differently from what he had imagined. He witnessed daily the earnest and imposing life of great and distinguished persons, and felt astonished at the ease and grace which they

imparted to it. An army upon the march, a princely hero at its head, a host of united warriors, and a multitude of thronging worshippers inspired and filled his imagination. In this state of mind he received the promised volumes, and in a short time, as we may readily imagine, the torrent of that mighty genius carried him along, and bore him to a boundless ocean when he soon lost and forgot himself.

CHAPTER IX.

The Baron's connexion with the actors had undergone many changes during their residence in the castle. At first there had been wonderful unanimity upon both sides, for when the Baron for the first time saw one of his own compositions with which he had sometimes honoured a private theatre, in the hands of real actors, and properly represented, he became highly delighted, purchased many little trifles for the actresses, and presented the actors with sundry bottles of champagne. They in return exerted themselves in the performance of his pieces, and Wilhelm spared no pains in committing accurately to memory the splendid speeches of the magnanimous hero, whose part it was his invariable lot to perform.

But, notwithstanding all this, many misunderstandings gradually arose. The Baron's partiality to certain actors became daily more remarkable, and this circumstance naturally annoyed the rest of the company. He gave exclusive promotion to his favourites, and by this means introduced a general spirit of jealousy and disunion. Melina, who had never been very famous at contending with difficulties, found himself now in the greatest perplexity. The favourites accepted the Baron's praises without evincing the slightest gratitude, whilst those who were neglected shewed their vexation in a thousand ways, and contrived to render the situation of that patron whom they had formerly so much admired, most disagreeable to himself. Their malicious delight was very much gratified by a certain poem from an anonymous author which was about this time circulated through the castle. Much good-humoured merriment had been occasioned even previously to this, by the connexion of the Baron with the company. Little anecdotes had been cir-

culated about him, certain occurrences had received material additions, and had been narrated in a more attractive and ridiculous form. At length a rumour went abroad that a species of professional rivalry existed between him and some of the actors who aspired to the honour of authorship, and this rumour originated the poem of which we have spoken, and which we here subjoin.

My Lord, poor devil though I be,
I envy you your happy lot,
Your fine estates, your high degree,
Your castle and all else you've got.
Your father's house, your place at Court,
Your wealth, your game, and right to sport.

And a poor luckless devil like me,
My Lord, I see you envy too,
Because dame Nature, kind and free,
Has proved my friend so good and true,
Has made me light of heart and head
And poor – though not with brains of lead.

Suppose then, good, my Lord, that we
Preserve our separate honours yet,
That you your father's offspring be,
And I my mother's favoured pet,
Neither of hate or grief the sport,
Content and glad if each one chooses,
I claiming no reward at Court.
And you no place among the Muses.

Opinions were much divided upon the merits of this poem, of which copies in almost illegible handwriting were in general circulation. No person entertained even a suspicion of the author, but when Wilhelm observed the malicious delight which many of the company felt at the occurrence, he expressed his sentiments very warmly.

"We Germans," he observed, "deserve that our Muses should suffer in the contempt they have so long sustained, since we are unwilling to appreciate men of rank when from various motives they dedicate themselves to literature. Foreign nations have taught us that birth, rank, and fortune are quite consistent with genius and taste, for the names of many noblemen are on the list of their most distinguished authors. In Germany it has been a wonder hitherto that a man of birth should devote himself to literature, and few celebrated names have sought to become more renowned by their love of art and science, but many nevertheless have

risen out of darkness and have shone like unknown stars in the horizon. But it will not always happen so, and if I am not greatly mistaken, at the present moment the first classes in the nation are commencing to devote their talents to the task of contending for the fairest garlands of literature. Nothing therefore can be more distressing to me than to see the citizen sneer at the nobleman who loves the society of the Muses, and even men of rank with thoughtless levity deterring their own equals from a career where honour and happiness are the portion of all."

The concluding remark seemed to be intended for the Count, as Wilhelm had understood that he had expressed approbation of the poem. In fact the Count was fond of jesting with the Baron, in his own peculiar way, and was glad to avail himself of such an opportunity of annoying him. Each one entertained his own suspicions about the author of the poem, and the Count, whom no one could excel in acuteness, entertained a suspicion, to the correctness of which he was soon ready to swear. The poem he thought must be the production of his Pedant, who was a shrewd fellow enough, and in whom he had for some time noticed the existence of a certain poetical talent. In order to enjoy a rare entertainment, therefore, he summoned the Pedant one morning into his presence, and obliged him to recite the poem in his own peculiar style before the Countess, the Baroness and Jarno, for which he earned their praise and applause as well as a present, and he cleverly managed to evade the inquiries of the Count, whether he did not also possess some other poems of an earlier date. By this means the Pedant obtained the reputation of an author and a wit, and in the eyes of the Baron's friends of a satirist and ill-natured man. But from that moment the Count applauded him most zealously, no matter how badly he might act, till at length the creature grew perfectly conceited and silly, and began to think that he also might be promoted to a private apartment in the castle, like Philina.

If he had accomplished this plan without delay he would have avoided a great misfortune. For soon afterwards as he was returning one evening at a late hour to the old castle, feeling his way along the narrow lane, he was suddenly waylaid and seized, by some unknown persons, whilst some others set upon him and beat him so unmercifully, that they left

him half dead, and he could with difficulty crawl home to his companions. The latter, though they professed to be very angry, felt secretly rejoiced at the occurrence and could scarcely restrain their open laughter at seeing him so well chastised, and his new brown coat bedaubed and dusty and as white as if he had been working for a whole day in a flour mill.

The Count when he was informed of the occurrence burst into a violent rage. He considered it as a most heinous offence, called it a breach of the Burgfried or Castle Peace, and required that the most strict investigation should be set on foot by his own judge. It was considered that the sufferer's white and dusty coat would afford the most convincing evidence upon the inquiry, and accordingly every individual in the castle in any way concerned with flour or meal or dust of any kind was brought up for examination, but in vain.

The Baron protested upon his honour that jokes of such a kind displeased him exceedingly, and declared that although the conduct of the Count had been most unfriendly, yet he had forgotten it, and that he had not the smallest share in the misfortune which had happened to the poet or satirist, or whatever they might please to call him.

But the bustle of the strangers and the general commotion of the house soon caused the whole affair to be forgotten, and the unfortunate Pedant had to pay a dear penalty for the pleasure he had enjoyed of strutting for a short time in borrowed plumage.

The company of actors who now played regularly every evening, and on the whole were well received, had commenced, in proportion as they were well treated, to grow more and more exorbitant in their demands. They complained that their fare, no less than their attendance and their apartments, was quite insufficient, and they entreated their patron the Baron to see that they were more abundantly provided with all the accommodations and enjoyments he had promised them. By degrees their complaints grew louder and the exertions of their friend to satisfy them more and more ineffectual.

Wilhelm now appeared seldom in public, except during rehearsals and performances. Secluded in one of the most private apartments, where Mignon and the harper were

alone permitted to see him, he lived and moved in his Shaksperean world, without sympathy or feeling for any thing beyond it.

Stories are told of enchanters who by their magical incantations have summoned a countless multitude of unearthly forms into their chamber. Their conjurations are so powerful that a crowd of spirits quickly fill their dwelling, and thronging within the limits of their narrow circle, they soar above their master's head, ever increasing, and revolving in perpetual transformation. Every corner is full and every crevice occupied. Little embryo imps expand and giant monsters dwindle into nothing. Unfortunately the magician has forgotten the word by which the crowd of spirits may be dispersed.

Thus sat Wilhelm in his solitude, and with uncomprehended power a thousand emotions and feelings were stirred to life within him, of which previously he could have formed no idea or conception. Nothing could seduce him from his happiness, and he was sorely distressed if any one approached to trouble him with news of what was happening in the world.

He scarcely heeded the information which was brought to him one day, that a punishment was about to be inflicted in the courtyard of the castle—that a boy was to be flogged, upon suspicion of having committed a burglary, and who because he was dressed in the coat of a wig-maker it was thought might possibly have taken part in the late attack upon the Baron's favourite. The youth denied the charge vehemently, and it was impossible therefore to punish him expressly for that offence, but they had determined to chastise him as a vagabond and let him go, for he had been found lurking in the neighbourhood for several days, had passed his nights in the mills, and had lately planted a ladder against the garden wall by which he had descended to the other side.

Wilhelm considered the whole affair as very unimportant, until Mignon entering his apartment hastily informed him that the prisoner was no other than Frederich, who since the occurrence with the Stallmeister had disappeared and had not been heard of by the company.

Being much interested in the boy's behalf, Wilhelm rose without delay, and found that preparations for the punishment were already proceeding in the courtyard of the castle. For the Count liked solemnity even in such matters. The

boy was brought forward. Wilhelm advanced and begged for delay as he was acquainted with the prisoner, and might perhaps adduce something in his favour. He found some difficulty in procuring attention to his representations, but at length he was permitted to speak with the youth in private. Frederich protested that he was completely ignorant of the ill-treatment which the Pedant had received —that he had certainly been lurking about the castle, and had stolen in by night in order to visit Philina, whose apartment he had discovered, and to which he would undoubtedly have obtained entrance, if he had not been detected in the attempt.

Wilhelm, who for the credit of the company, was anxious to conceal this statement, hastened to the Stallmeister, and implored him to employ his knowledge of the world and of mankind, to arrange the whole affair and to protect the boy.

This inventive genius, with Wilhelm's assistance, contrived a little story to the effect that the boy had been a member of the company, that he had ran away, but was anxious to return and to be received again amongst them. He had therefore determined to visit some of his former friends in the night time that he might entreat their assistance. Evidence was offered of his good conduct in other respects, the ladies interfered in his behalf, and he was pardoned.

Wilhelm received him, and Frederich thus became the third member of the extraordinary family which our friend had lately adopted as his own. The old Harper and Mignon received the returning prodigal kindly, and all three determined from that moment to serve their friend and patron with zeal and devotion, and to contribute in every possible way to his happiness.

CHAPTER X.

Philina succeeded now in ingratiating herself more and more with the ladies. When they were alone, she directed her conversation to the men who frequented the Prince's residence, and Wilhelm was not by any means the last or the most insignificant person who engaged their attention.

It had not escaped the observation of the cunning girl that he had made a deep impression upon the heart of the Countess, she therefore frequently made him the subject of conversation, relating what she knew or did not know concerning him, but she was careful never to mention any thing which could be interpreted to his disadvantage. On the contrary, she praised his nobleness of mind, his generosity, and above all his gallantry and deferential conduct towards the ladies. She was, moreover, cautious in answering any inquiries about him, and when the Baroness observed the increasing partiality of her beautiful friend for him, she evinced great satisfaction at the discovery. Her own intrigues with several men, and particularly of late with Jarno, had not escaped the notice of the Countess, whose pure soul could not regard such levities without censure and silent disapprobation.

Thus the Baroness, no less than Philina, became deeply interested in cementing the intimacy between Wilhelm and the Countess, and Philina hoped that she might yet be able to turn things to her own advantage, and succeed in regaining the favour of the youth, whose affections she had lost.

One day when the Count had joined the rest of the party in a hunting excursion, and their return was not expected till the following day, the Baroness resolved upon playing a frolic which was completely in her style. She was fond of assuming disguises and of surprising her companions in the dress sometimes of a peasant girl, and at others in the garb of a page or a huntsman. In fact she resembled a fairy, who was present every where, and appeared at the very time when she was least expected. Her joy was extreme when she could succeed in waiting upon the company, or otherwise join in their amusements without being detected, and great was her delight in eventually disclosing herself. Towards evening she sent for Wilhelm, and invited him to her chamber, but when the appointed hour arrived she found herself otherwise engaged, and accordingly she deputed Philina to receive him.

Great was Wilhelm's astonishment upon making his appearance, to find the apartment occupied not by the honourable Baroness but by the giddy Philina. She received him with respectful dignity, an accomplishment which she had lately practised, and in this manner she compelled him to be courteous in return

She commenced by rallying him in general terms upon the good fortune which invariably attended him, and which she could not avoid remarking, had now brought him hither. Then she adverted in a delicate manner to his conduct towards her which had so deeply afflicted her, but she chiefly blamed and accused herself and confessed, that she had to a great degree merited his neglect; she then with much apparent candour entered into a detail of what she termed her previous situation, and added, that she would despise herself if she were incapable of improvement, or if she could not render herself worthy of his friendship.

Wilhelm was astonished at her words. His experience of the world was too limited to perceive that the most frivolous and good-for-nothing persons most frequently accuse themselves in bitter terms, acknowledging and lamenting their faults with candour, even when they are wholly destitute of resolution to turn from the evil courses which their irresistible nature has compelled them to pursue. He found it impossible, therefore, to be severe towards the pretty sinner; so they entered into conversation together, and he soon heard from her the plan of the strange disguise with which the Baroness intended to surprise her friend the Countess.

Wilhelm however could not approve of the project, and did not conceal his sentiments from Philina, but the entrance of the Baroness herself at the very moment, left him no time for reflection, and she forced him to accompany her, assuring him that the proper moment had arrived.

It was now dark. She led him into the Count's dressing apartment, where she made him change his own coat for the Count's silk morning gown and put on his cap with the red tassel, she then took him into the Cabinet, seated him in the large arm chair, gave him a book, lighted the argand lamp, told him how he was to act, and instructed him in the part he was to play.

She said the Countess should now be informed that her husband had unexpectedly arrived and was in an extremely bad humour. She would of course come without delay, pace several times up and down the apartment, and at length seating herself upon the arm of the chair, would place her arm upon his shoulder, and address a few words to him. He was to play the husband's part as long and as well as he

was able, and if at length he should be compelled to discover himself, he was to be polite, complimentary, and gallant.

Attired in this strange disguise, Wilhelm became a little restless. The mere proposal had surprised him, the sudden execution of the project afforded him no time for deliberation. Scarcely, however, had the Baroness retired from the apartment, than he at once perceived the danger of the part which he had undertaken to fill. He did not deny that the beauty, as well as the youth and grace of the Countess had made an impression upon him, but as he was averse by nature to empty gallantry and his principles forbade all thoughts of a more serious enterprise, he was reduced at the moment to a state of no small perplexity. The fear of displeasing the Countess or of pleasing her too much made him equally uneasy.

Every female charm which had ever produced an impression upon him now rose once more before his imagination. Mariana appeared in her white morning gown and solicited his remembrance. The charms of Philina, her beautiful hair and her insinuating endearments had once more been rendered attractive by her late presence. But all this was as nothing and retreated as it were behind a distant veil, when he thought of the noble, blooming Countess, whose arm he was in a few minutes to feel upon his neck, and whose innocent caresses he would be invited to return.

He certainly could not foresee what strange accident was to free him from this perplexity. We may therefore conjecture his astonishment or rather his terror when the door opened behind him, and at the first stolen look in the glass, he saw the Count distinctly enter with a light in his hand. He continued but for a very short time in doubt as to the course he should pursue, whether he should sit still or rise, fly, confess, deny, or ask forgiveness. The Count was standing motionless in the doorway, but he soon retired and closed the door gently after him. At the same moment the Baroness entered the apartment by a side door, extinguished the lamp, dragged Wilhelm from his chair and led him with her into the Cabinet. He took off his dressing gown without delay and restored it to its former place. The Baroness

took Wilhelm's own coat beneath her arm and hurried him through various chambers, passages and corridors until at length when she had recovered her breath she stated, that having hastened to the Countess to communicate the fictitious information of her husband's arrival, she replied, "I know it already, and I wonder what can have happened, I saw him this instant riding in at the side gate." Upon hearing this the Baroness had rushed to the Count's apartment in the utmost alarm to communicate with Wilhelm.

"Unfortunately," exclaimed the latter, "you have arrived too late. The Count has already been in the apartment and beheld me sitting there."

"Did he recognize you?"

"I do not know. He looked at me in the glass, as I looked at him, but before I could decide whether it was an apparition or the Count himself, he retired and closed the door behind him."

The perplexity of the Baroness increased when a servant came to call her, and stated that the Count was at that moment with his lady. With anxious heart she went and found that though the Count was silent and reserved, he was kinder and more gentle than usual. She knew not what to think. The conversation turned upon the incidents of the chase and of the accident which had occasioned his unexpected return. The topic was soon exhausted. The Count became silent, and the Baroness was greatly astonished when he inquired for Wilhelm, and expressed a wish that he should be sent for, in order that he might read something.

Wilhelm who by this time had resumed his own apparel, and had recovered himself in the apartment of the Baroness, obeyed the summons with some trepidation. The Count handed him a book, from which with much hesitation he read a rather romantic tale. His voice, however, was uncertain and trembling, but this well corresponded with the nature of the story. Several times the Count gave friendly tokens of his approbation, praised the excellence of the reading, and finally signified that Wilhelm might retire.

CHAPTER XI.

Wilhelm had scarcely finished a few of Shakspeare's plays, before he became so much affected by them that he could not continue their perusal. His whole soul was in a state of excitement. He thereupon sought an opportunity to speak with Jarno, and he could not adequately express his gratitude for the pleasure to which he had introduced him.

"I foresaw plainly," observed Jarno, "that you could not remain indifferent to the excellence of the most extraordinary and wonderful of all writers."

"Yes," exclaimed Wilhelm, "I do not think that any book, any man, or any occurrence of life has ever produced so strong an effect upon me, as the precious works to which by your kindness I have been introduced. They appear to be the productions of a heavenly genius who has descended to the abodes of men, to render them, by the gentlest lessons, acquainted with themselves. They are not mere poems. One might think during their perusal that he stood before the opened, solemn books of destiny, through which the whirlwind of impassioned life is breathing, whilst the leaves are agitated to and fro. I have been so astonished and overcome by the strength and tenderness, the power and repose of these works, that I long for the time when I shall be able to continue their perusal."

"Bravo," said Jarno, holding out his hand to Wilhelm, and pressing his in return, "I knew it would be so, and the results which I anticipate are sure to follow."

"I wish," observed Wilhelm, "that I could explain to you all my present sensations. Every dream which I have ever indulged respecting man and his destiny, every idea I have ever entertained upon such subjects within my own secret soul, I find unfolded and complete in the compositions of Shakspeare. It appears as if he had unravelled to us the mystery of all our enigmas, even though we cannot explain wherein lies the actual word of solution. His men seem to be human beings, and yet they are not so. These wonderful and complicated creations of nature act like watches that are enclosed in crystal dial plates and cases, which whilst

they indicate the course of the hours, display the machinery and wheels by which they are set in motion. The few glances which I have cast into the world of Shakspeare impel me irresistibly to march forward with hasty strides into the world of active life, to mingle in the flood of destiny which courses through it, and finally, to fill a few goblets from the deep tide of true nature, and distribute them from the stage to the thirsty inhabitants of my native land."

"I rejoice at the disposition of mind in which I now behold you," said Jarno, placing his hand at the same time upon the shoulder of the excited youth. "Do not abandon your resolution of commencing an active life, and lose no time in taking advantage of the good years which are still yours. If I can serve you I will do so with all my heart. I have not yet inquired how you have found your way into a company for which you are unfitted both by birth and education. But I both hope and perceive that you are anxious to leave it. I am alike ignorant of your family and of your domestic circumstances, and therefore take heed of the confidence you may repose in me. But I may say this much. The times of war in which we live may occasion rapid changes of fortune, and if you feel disposed to dedicate your strength and talents to our service, not shrinking from labour and inevitable danger, I can find an opportunity to establish you in a position which you will never subsequently repent having filled." Wilhelm found it impossible to express his thanks adequately, and felt disposed to make his friend and benefactor acquainted with the history of his whole life.

During this conversation they had penetrated far into the park, and had reached the road which traversed it. Jarno paused for a moment, and then observed, "Consider my proposal, make up your mind, let me have an answer in a few days, and place confidence in me. I assure you, I cannot comprehend how you can induce yourself to associate with such people. I have often felt both pained and annoyed that for the sake of earning a sorry subsistence you should have become attached to this company of wandering mountebanks."

He had not finished speaking when an officer rode up hastily, followed by a groom leading a spare horse. Jarno

saluted him in a loud and familiar tone. The officer leaped from his saddle, and they both embraced and conversed together, whilst Wilhelm, somewhat amazed at the concluding words of his warlike friend, stood by in silence. Jarno examined some papers which the stranger had handed to him, whilst the latter going up to Wilhelm, offered him his hand, and exclaimed with emphasis, "I find you in honourable company, follow the counsel of a friend, and at the same time fulfil the wish of one who though a stranger, is deeply interested in your welfare." So saying, he embraced Wilhelm and pressed him cordially to his heart. Jarno approached at the same instant, and observed to the stranger, "It will be better that I should accompany you, you can then receive the necessary instructions, and ride forward before nightfall." Upon this they both leapt into their saddles and left our astonished friend to his own silent contemplations.

The last words of Jarno were still echoing in Wilhelm's ears. He could not bear to hear the two beings who had so undesignedly won his sympathies so ill spoken of by a man whom he so highly honoured. The strange embrace of the officer, with whom he was unacquainted, made but a slight impression upon him, though it had engaged his attention for a moment, but Jarno's words had smote him to the heart. He felt deeply wounded, and now, as he returned homewards, he reproached himself keenly for having mistaken or forgotten the unfeeling cold-heartedness of Jarno, which was so evidently pourtrayed in his conduct and in his very looks. "No," he exclaimed, "thou heartless man of the world, fancy not that thou canst prove a friend! All that thou canst offer me is not worth the feeling of affection which binds me to these destitute creatures. How happy am I to have discovered thus early what is to be expected from thee."

He clasped Mignon in his arms as she ran to meet him, exclaiming, "No! nothing shall ever separate us, my beloved little darling! The specious prudence of the world shall never induce me to forsake thee, or to forget how much I owe thee."

The child, whose cordial embraces he was accustomed to avoid, was enraptured at this unexpected exhibition of ten-

derness, and clung so firmly to him, that he could hardly disengage himself from her.

From this time he watched Jarno more narrowly, and his conduct did not appear to him to be wholly praiseworthy; indeed many things occurred of which he altogether disapproved. For instance, he began to entertain a strong suspicion that the satire upon the Baron for which the poor pedant had so severely suffered, was Jarno's composition. And as the latter had joked over the circumstance in Wilhelm's presence, our friend thought he could recognize in such conduct unequivocal signs of a bad heart, since nothing in his opinion could be more wicked than to ridicule an innocent being, whose woes one had occasioned, instead of comforting and consoling him. Gladly would Wilhelm himself have obtained satisfaction for the pedant, and by a very remarkable accident it seemed that he had lately found a clue to the perpetrators of the outrage.

It had been hitherto carefully concealed from Wilhelm that several young officers were accustomed to spend entire nights in the lower apartments of the old castle, in riotous company with some of the actors and actresses. One morning having risen early according to his custom, he entered one of those chambers by chance, and found the young gentlemen above mentioned employed in making their toilettes after a somewhat remarkable fashion. They had mixed a quantity of chalk and water in a bowl, and were engaged in daubing their waistcoats and pantaloons with the paste, without undressing, and by this means they very expeditiously restored the purity of their apparel. Our friend, who was astonished at this strange proceeding, instantly remembered the dusty and white powdered coat of the poor pedant, and his suspicions were strengthened when he learned that there were some relations of the Baron among the party.

In order better to satisfy his suspicions, he determined to invite the young gentlemen to breakfast. They were all in high spirits, and related many lively anecdotes. One of them, who had been for some time engaged in the recruiting service, was loud in extolling the cunning and activity of his captain, who possessed the art of ensnaring all descriptions of persons, and of imposing upon them by every kind of

device. He related in precise terms, how many young men of good family and of liberal education, had been deceived by promises of honour and promotion, and he laughed heartily at the deluded youths, who at first had considered it a high honour, to be esteemed and introduced by so respectable, brave, prudent, and generous an officer.

How did Wilhelm bless his good genius for having pointed out to him the abyss, to the very brink of which he had so incautiously approached. Henceforth he could see nothing in Jarno but the recruiting sergeant, and the embrace of the strange officer no longer seemed a mystery to him. He felt disgusted with such men, and from that moment he avoided all contact with every individual who wore a uniform. Indeed, the news which soon arrived that the army was about to march from its present quarters, would have been particularly welcome, if he had not feared that he might thus lose the society of his lovely friend for ever.

CHAPTER XII.

In the meantime the Baroness had spent some days in the agonies of apprehension and unsatisfied curiosity. For since the adventure which we have related, the conduct of the Count had become an inexplicable enigma. His manner was completely altered, he had ceased to indulge in any of his customary jokes. He was more considerate in his demands upon the company and upon the rest of the attendants. He exhibited but little pedantry or display of authority; on the contrary, he had grown silent and reserved, and yet he seemed to be cheerful and to have become quite another man. For the public reading, which he sometimes attended, he now made choice of certain serious and religious books, and the Baroness herself lived in a constant state of fear, lest beneath his apparent quiet demeanour, he might conceal a feeling of malice, and harbour a secret intention of avenging the offence, which he had accidentally discovered. She resolved therefore to admit Jarno into her confidence, and she took

this step the more freely, because she already occupied a position with regard to him, where secrets are not accustomed to prevail. Jarno had lately become her most attached friend, but they were clever enough to conceal their attachment and their pleasures from the talkative persons by whom they were surrounded. But this new romance had not escaped the eyes of the Countess, and most probably the Baroness sought to engage her friend in a similar enterprise, in order that she herself might thus escape the silent reproaches, which she frequently had to endure from that noble-minded woman.

Scarcely had the Baroness related the adventure to her friend, than he exclaimed with a burst of laughter, "The old man doubtless believes that he has seen his ghost! he fears that the apparition bodes some misfortune, or perhaps, his death, and he has now become quite subdued, as is always the case with cowards when they think of that final consummation which no mortal can escape. But softly! I have no fear but he will yet live long enough; however, the event will enable us to manage him in such a way, that he shall never again prove troublesome either to his wife or to his household."

Accordingly whenever any opportunity offered, and the Count happened to be present, they introduced the subject of ghosts, visions, warnings, and such topics of conversation. Jarno played the sceptic, as did the Baroness also, and they expressed their doubts so strongly, that at length the Count taking Jarno aside, would reprove him for his free-thinking, and endeavour to convince him by what he himself had seen of the possibility and reality of supernatural appearances. Jarno then pretended to be surprised, to doubt and finally to be convinced, but in private with his friend he ridiculed the weak-minded worldling who had been turned from his evil ways by a phantom, but who nevertheless merited some degree of praise, for having awaited the approach of a dire misfortune, perhaps of death itself, with so much composure.

"Perhaps he might not have been so well satisfied with the most natural result of this strange appearance," exclaimed the Baroness, with her wonted cheerfulness, which she had once more resumed, as soon as all fear had been dispelled from her heart. Jarno was now richly rewarded, and new

plans were contrived for still further alarming the Count, and for increasing and confirming the affection of the Countess towards Wilhelm.

With this view, they related the entire story to the Countess, who at first listened with displeasure, but subsequently became more thoughtful, and in her moments of solitude employed herself in conjecturing, in pursuing, and in painting the scenes which had been prepared for her.

The measures which were now adopted on all sides, allowed no doubt to be entertained that the armies were soon to move forward, and that the Prince would change his head quarters. It was even reported that the Prince would leave the castle and return to the city. Our actors were enabled therefore to calculate what might happen, but Melina alone adopted any decided course; the others, from this time, thought of nothing but the enjoyment of the present.

Wilhelm, however, was engaged in the execution of an important task. The Countess had asked him for a copy of his compositions, and he considered this request to be the highest reward that he could receive for his labours.

A young author, who has never appeared in print, invariably devotes infinite pains to furnish a clear and faultless copy of his works. Such a moment appears to him to be the golden age of authorship. He is transported back to those times when the press had not yet inundated the world with useless writings, when only the noblest productions of genius were copied and preserved by the worthiest men, and hence he readily indulged the error that a carefully copied manuscript like his, must necessarily be a work of genius, worthy to be valued and esteemed by a critic and patron of literature.

Preparations were now made for a great festival in honour of the Prince, who was shortly to take his departure. Many ladies from the neighbourhood had received invitations, and the Countess was dressed and in readiness to receive them at an early hour. Her toilette was more sumptuous than usual. Her head-dress and ornaments were in the best taste, and she wore her most costly jewels. The Baroness also had spared no pains to display the utmost elegance and splendour. Philina, who observed that both ladies felt

rather weary in expecting the arrival of their guests, proposed to send for Wilhelm, who was anxious to present his manuscript which he had now completed, and to read aloud some of its contents. He arrived, and felt completely astonished at the figure and at the charms of the Countess, which her present attire displayed to great advantage. He commenced reading in obedience to the wish of the ladies, but with so much hesitation and absence of mind, that if his audience had not been very complaisant, they would at once have dismissed him.

When he looked at the Countess it seemed as if electric flames were sparkling before his eyes. Suddenly he became breathless, and was forced to discontinue his reading. He had always admired the beauty of the Countess, but now he thought he had never beheld so perfect a creature, and a thousand thoughts crowded upon his mind, of which the following may be considered the substance.

"What an error do poets and sentimental persons commit, in condemning ornament and decoration; and requiring that women of every rank should be attired in a dress of the simplest kind and most conformable to nature. They find fault with ornament, without reflecting that when they see an ugly or merely ordinary person richly and sumptuously dressed, it is not the decoration, but the individual which displeases them. And I would now ask the best judges in the world, whether they would be satisfied to see a single one of those folds, ribbons or laces, braids, curls or jewels removed? Would they incur the risk of disturbing the delightful impression which seems so spontaneous and so natural? Yes, so natural I repeat. For as Minerva sprang in complete armour from the head of Jupiter, this goddess appears to have stepped with light foot fully attired and decorated from the bosom of some beautiful flower."

During his reading he fixed his eyes upon her frequently, in order to imprint her image indelibly upon his memory. He made frequent mistakes, but his mind nevertheless did not become confused, although upon other occasions he had held that a trivial fault in a word, or even in a letter, was a heinous offence which destroyed the effect of an entire recitation.

A false alarm that the expected guests had arrived, now

brought the reading to an end. The Baroness thereupon took her departure, and the Countess, in the act of closing her writing desk, took out her jewel case and put some additional rings upon her finger. "We must soon separate," she observed, at the same time looking at the jewel case attentively, "receive, therefore, the memorial of a kind friend, who has no more earnest wish than for your happiness." She then selected a ring, which enclosed beneath the crystal, a beautiful lock of woven hair set round with precious stones. She handed it to Wilhelm, who upon receiving it, knew not what to say or to do, but remained motionless as if he had been rooted to the ground. The Countess closed her desk, and took her seat upon the sofa.

"And must I go without receiving any thing?" said Philina, as she sank upon her knee and extended her hand to the Countess. "See the poor simpleton!" she continued, "who is so ready to speak when he should be silent, and is now wholly incapable even of stammering out his gratitude. Come, sir, testify your thanks at least by some expressive action, and if to-day you can invent nothing, at least take example by me."

Philina seized the Countess's right hand and kissed it with fervour. Wilhelm thereupon fell upon his knee, took her left hand, and pressed it to his lips. The Countess seemed confused but not displeased.

"Ah!" cried Philina, "I have never witnessed such splendid attire, and have never seen a lady so fit to wear it. What bracelets! and what a hand! what a necklace, and what a bosom!"

"Peace! flatterer," said the Countess.

"Is this a miniature of the Count?" inquired Philina, pointing to a rich medallion which the Countess wore at her left side, suspended by a gold chain.

"He is painted in his wedding dress," replied the Countess.

"Was he then so young?" asked Philina. "I know you have been only a few years married."

"For the appearance of youth the artist is responsible," answered the Countess.

"He is very handsome," added Philina. "But," she continued, at the same time laying her hand upon the

Countess's heart, "has no other image ever found an entrance within this secret retreat?"

"You are a naughty child, Philina," said the Countess. "I have spoiled you. Never let me hear that speech again."

"If you are angry, I shall be wretched," cried Philina, springing to her feet and rushing from the apartment.

Wilhelm still held that beautiful hand within his own. The bracelet of the Countess caught his eye, which to his great astonishment bore the initial letters of his name, inscribed in precious stones.

"Do I posses your hair within this precious ring?" he inquired, in a modest tone.

"You do," replied the Countess softly. She then became more collected in her manner, and pressing his hand, she said to him, "Rise—and farewell."

"Here," he exclaimed, "by the strangest coincidence, are the initials of my name." He pointed to the bracelet.

"Indeed!" replied the Countess; "it is the cypher of a female friend."

"My name!" he added; "my initials! But do not forget me. Your image is indelibly engraven upon my heart. Farewell—I must fly."

He kissed her hand and tried to rise. As in dreams, strange things are connected with still stranger, and we are overwhelmed with astonishment at what ensues, so, without comprehending how it occurred, he held the Countess in his arms, her lips rested upon his, and she returned his warm kisses of affection, which imparted to them both, a bliss known only to those who imbibe the first draught of joy from the foaming goblet of love.

Her head rested upon his shoulder, and she took no heed of her disordered ringlets or her dress. Her arm embraced him. He too embraced her with fervour, and pressed her repeatedly to his heart. Oh, that such a moment could have endured for ever, and alas! for envious fortune which interrupted our friend's enjoyment of that brief delight!

But how was Wilhelm terrified, and with what astonishment did he awake from his blessed dream, when the Countess suddenly placed her hand upon her heart and rushed from him with a shriek.

He stood amazed before her. She held her other hand before her eyes, and after a pause exclaimed, "Be gone—without delay."

He still remained.

"Leave me," she continued, and taking her hand from her eyes, she gazed upon him with an indescribable look, and then added with a voice of the utmost tenderness, "fly instantly, if you love me."

Wilhelm had left the house and gained his own apartment before he well knew what had occurred.

Unhappy lovers! What strange warning of chance or destiny was it, which thus tore you from each other!

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I.

WILHELM was standing at the window in a contemplative mood—he leaned upon his arm and looked out into the fields. Philina approached quietly across the large apartment, she took his arm and commenced ridiculing his serious deportment.

"Do not laugh," he said, "is it not dreadful to think how time passes, and how every thing changes and comes to an end? See here, for instance. But a short time ago, a splendid camp stood close to us, and how beautiful the tents looked! what activity reigned within them! how carefully did they guard the surrounding enclosure! and now all this has disappeared. For a short time longer those heaps of trampled straw and remnants of suttlers' fires will remain, but soon the surface of the ground will be ploughed and reaped as before, and the presence of so many thousand brave warriors in this neighbourhood will exist but in the recollection of a few old men."

Philina commenced a song, and drew Wilhelm along with her to join the dancing in the hall. "Since we cannot overtake time," she exclaimed, "when it has once fled, let us at least pay honour to its fleeting course by mirth and cheerfulness."

She had scarcely taken a few turns through the hall, when Madame Melina joined them. Philina was wicked enough to propose that she should join in the dance, thus reminding her friend of her increasing and ungraceful looking figure.

"I wish," said Philina, when her back was turned, "that I may never behold another woman in an interesting situation."

"Do not say so," observed Laertes.

"It becomes her so ill. Have you not observed the awkward motion of her shortened petticoats as she walks

along? She has not the least degree of tact, and has no notion of arranging herself so as to conceal her condition."

"Never mind," said Laertes, "time will soon come to her relief."

"How pleasant it would be," remarked Philina, "if children were like fruit, and could be gathered from the trees."

The Baron now entered, and addressed them in a friendly tone, offering a few presents from the Count and Countess, who had taken their departure at an early hour. He then went to Wilhelm, who was engaged with Mignon in an adjoining apartment. The child had lately evinced much affection for him, and had shewed an increased interest in his affairs, having made enquiries about his parents, his friends and relations, reminding him thus of his duty to communicate to them some information about himself.

In delivering the farewell greeting of the family, the Baron assured Wilhelm that the Count had been exceedingly delighted with his poetical talents, as well as with his theatrical labours. In proof of this assertion, the Baron produced a purse, through whose beautiful apertures the sparkling brightness of some new gold coins shone temptingly. Wilhelm drew back, and refused to accept the present.

"You must consider this present," said the Baron, "as a remuneration for your time, a compensation for your trouble, not as payment for your talents. If our mental qualifications can secure us a fair reputation and the friendship of mankind, it is only fair that our diligence and attention should secure for us the means of existence, as we are not quite ethereal beings. Had we been in town, where every thing is easily procured, we should have converted this trifling sum of money into a watch, a ring, or some similar article; but we must be satisfied now to place the wand of enchantment in your own hands and request you to procure for yourself some token of remembrance which you may consider most useful, and most in accordance with your taste, and to keep it for our sakes. But at the same time you must hold the purse in honour. It was knit for you by the ladies, and they intended that their labour should impart an additional charm to the contents."

"Pardon my embarrassment," said Wilhelm, "and ex-

cuse my reluctance to accept this present. It robs my services of their value and destroys all the free play of pleasant recollections. Money is an admirable thing to cancel obligations and efface their memory, but I own I should not like to be forgotten by your family."

"That can never be the case," replied the Baron; "but with your delicate feelings, you can scarcely wish that the Count should remain your debtor, knowing that he is a man who always feels a pride in being punctual and just. He is aware of the great labour you have undergone, and of the anxiety with which you have sought to execute his wishes; and he knows, moreover, that in order to expedite his plans, you made no scruple to expend your own money. How then can I return to him without bearing the assurance that his gratitude has afforded you sincere pleasure?"

"If I thought only of myself and followed my own private inclinations," replied Wilhelm, "I should, in spite of all your reasons, persist in refusing this handsome and honourable gift, but I cannot deny that whilst it occasions one perplexity, it frees me from another with respect to my relations, the thought of whom has occasioned me much inward uneasiness. I have not made the most advantageous disposal either of my money or my time, and I am answerable for both, and now through the generosity of the Count, I shall be able to console my family with an account of the good fortune to which this unexpected incident has led me. I abandon therefore those feelings of delicacy, which like the warnings of a tender conscience, should lead us upon such occasions to a higher duty, and in order that I may appear with courage before my father, I shall submit to seem ashamed before you."

"How strange it is," observed the Baron, "that men should feel so much reluctance to accept money from their friends and patrons, when they would take any other present from them with joy and gratitude. And there are some other subjects upon which men manifest scruples of a similar kind."

"Is it not the same with every thing that concerns our honour?" inquired Wilhelm.

"Certainly," replied the Baron, "and with some other

prejudices also. And we must take care not to eradicate them, lest we should tear up some other noble plants at the same time. But I am always glad when, as occasion requires, men shew themselves superior to such prejudices; and I feel pleased when I remember the story of the celebrated poet, who having composed several plays for the court theatre, found them honoured with the approbation of the prince. 'He must have a splendid recompense,' said the generous monarch, 'ask him whether he will select a jewel, as he might scorn to accept a sum of money.' The author answered the courtier in his own humourous way, 'I am deeply thankful for the gracious suggestion, but as the King accepts money from us every day, I see no reason why I should feel ashamed to accept the same from him.'"

The Baron had scarcely left the room, when Wilhelm commenced eagerly to count over the contents of the purse, which had come to him in so unexpected, and as he thought in so undeserved a manner. It seemed as if the value and dignity of gold, a feeling which we well understand in later years, now presented their attractions to him for the first time, as the handsome glittering pieces rolled out from the beautiful purse. He counted them, and found that, as Melina had promised to repay the loan immediately, his stock of cash was now as large as it had been on the day when Philina had first solicited his nosegay. He thought of his talents, therefore, with a certain degree of secret satisfaction, and felt elated at the recollection of the good fortune which had attended them. He seized his pen without further delay, and commenced a letter, to relieve his family from their apprehended anxiety, and to represent his own conduct in the most advantageous light. He avoided, however, entering into any circumstantial details, and only allowed his friends to conjecture what had happened to him, by his significant and mysterious expressions. The flourishing state of his exchequer, the success which he owed to his talents, the favour of the great, the partiality of the ladies, his extended acquaintance, the improvement of his bodily and mental powers, and finally his hopes for the future, were described so as to form a picture of wonderful enchantment. Indeed the Fata Morgana could scarcely have surpassed it.

Such was his happy enthusiasm, that he continued long

after he had finished his task, to hold a conversation with himself, in which he recapitulated the contents of his letter, and promised himself an active and glorious career for the future. The example set by so many noble warriors had aroused him, the poetry of Shakspeare had introduced him to a new world, and his whole being had become animated with fresh warmth by the lips of the beautiful Countess. It was impossible that all these things should be lost upon him.

The Stallmeister now came to inquire whether they had completed their packing. Unfortunately, no one but Melina had bestowed a thought upon the subject, although the time had nearly arrived for their departure. The Count had promised to provide conveyances for the party, for a portion of the journey; and, as the horses were now in readiness, it would not do to detain them. Wilhelm asked for his trunk; Madame Melina had appropriated it to herself. He inquired about his money. Melina had packed it away carefully, and it lay at the very bottom of of his trunk. But Philina suggesting that she had some room to spare in her's, she accordingly took Wilhelm's clothes, and requested Mignon to collect his other things. It was not without much reluctance that Wilhelm found himself compelled to consent to this arrangement.

Whilst they were packing and preparing, Melina observed, "I regret that we should have to travel in this manner, like rope dancers and mountebanks; I wish that Mignon would dress herself in female apparel, and that the harper would consent to cut off his beard." Mignon upon this clung closely to Wilhelm, and exclaimed with great warmth, "I am a boy, and will not be taken for a girl!" The old man was silent, and Philina made some merry observations on the peculiarities of her friend the Count. "If the harper allows his beard to be cut off, he can sew it carefully upon a ribbon and preserve it, that he may assume it again, whenever he meets the Count in any other part of the world, for it is to his beard alone that he is indebted for the favour of lordship."

Upon being pressed to explain this singular speech, she stated that the Count always considered that it contributed very much to complete the illusion, when actors continued

to play their parts and sustain their characters in common life. On this account it was that he had been so partial to the pedant; and he had warmly approved of the harper's custom of wearing his false beard, not only in the evening upon the stage, but constantly in the daytime, and he had expressed himself as highly delighted with the natural appearance of that masquerading appendage.

Whilst the rest of the company were amusing themselves at this mistake, and at other singular opinions of the Count, the harper took Wilhelm aside, bade him farewell, and implored with tears that he would allow him to depart. Wilhelm comforted him, assuring him that he would defend him against every foe, promising that no one should injure a hair of his head, much less dismiss him against his consent.

The old man was deeply moved, and a strange fire glowed within his eyes, "I am not leaving you on that account," he said, "but I have often felt an inward reproof for having remained with you so long. I ought not to linger any where, for misfortune pursues me and injures those who attach themselves to me. You will have every thing to fear, if you do not let me go; but ask no questions, I do not belong to myself and I cannot stay."

"To whom then do you belong? Who can exert such influence over you?"

"O, Sir! let me preserve my dreadful secret, and allow me to depart. The vengeance which pursues me, is not that of an earthly judge. I belong to an unpitying destiny. I cannot, and I dare not stay."

"In your present condition I cannot let you go."

"It would be high treason against you, my benefactor, were I to delay. I am safe whilst I remain with you; but you are in danger. You know not whom you have near you. And yet I am rather unfortunate than guilty. My presence scares all happiness away, and good actions possess no virtue when performed by me. I must be a fugitive, and restless that I may escape my evil genius. He pursues me with slow steps, and only shews himself when I would lay down my weary head to take repose. I cannot evince my gratitude more strongly than by bidding you farewell."

"Strange being! you can neither destroy my confidence in you, nor my hopes that I shall see you happy. I do not

wish to penetrate the secret of your superstition; but while you live amid wondrous forebodings and entanglements of fate, let me tell you for your consolation and comfort, that you shall share my happy fortune; and we shall soon see which is more powerful, your dark destiny, or my bright genius."

Wilhelm seized the opportunity to comfort him with many soothing speeches, for he had lately begun to suspect that his strange companion had been led by chance or fate, to the commission of some dreadful crime, by the remembrance of which his mind was continually haunted. Only a few days ago Wilhelm had overheard one of his songs, and he had been forcibly impressed by the following lines:—

To him the morning's radiant glow
With angry flames is red,
And Nature's brightness here below
Appals his guilty head.

The old man, however, might use whatever arguments he pleased, Wilhelm was never without an appropriate reply. He knew how to represent every thing in the most favourable light; and he always spoke so bravely, so heartily and so consolingly, that the old man felt himself once more revived, and abandoned all his whims.

CHAPTER II.

Melina entertained some hopes of being able to establish himself and his company in some small thriving town. They had already reached the spot to which the Count's horses were to convey them; and they began therefore to look about for some other conveyances to continue their journey. Melina had undertaken this task; and, as usual, he afforded proofs of his niggardly disposition. Wilhelm, however, had in his purse the shining ducats of the Countess; and, as he considered himself entitled to spend them freely, he forgot how favourably he had made them figure in the stately balance which he had transmitted to his relations.

His friend Shakspeare, whom he pronounced to be his godfather with feelings of the greatest delight, rejoicing that his name was Wilhelm, had introduced him to a prince who

for a considerable time had been enchanted with the society of dissipated companions; and who, in spite of his own noble disposition, had enjoyed the rudeness, indecency, and wickedness of their sensual pursuits. He felt charmed with the ideal resemblance to his own actual condition; and the self-deception to which he so easily fell a prey, was by this means sensibly increased.

His thoughts were now turned to his style of dress. He considered that a waistcoat over which at times he might fling a short cloak would not be an inappropriate attire for a traveller. Long woven pantaloons and laced boots seemed to him the proper garb for a pedestrian. He procured in the next place, a handsome silk scarf, which he wore upon the plea that it would keep him warm. He then freed his neck from the tyranny of a cravat, and caused a few pieces of muslin to be sewed to his shirt, which as they were made rather broad, assumed the appearance of an antique ruff. The beautiful silk neck-kerchief, which he had received from Mariana, and which had been formerly saved from the flames, was tied in an easy knot beneath his muslin collar. A round hat with a party-coloured ribbon and a waving plume completed the masquerade of his attire.

The women protested that this dress was extremely becoming to him. Philina seemed enchanted with it, and since to make a nearer approach to the picture of his own ideal, he had caused his hair to be mercilessly clipped, she had solicited that his beautiful curls might be given to her. Wilhelm was not displeased with the request, as since his generosity had given him the right of assuming Prince Hal's manner towards his companions, he very soon acquired the habit of indulging in the practice of some silly fooleries. He fenced, and danced, and played all manner of tricks with his friends. In their gaiety of heart they drank rather copiously of the miserable wine which they were able to procure, and in the disorder of this irregular life, Philina watched every motion of our coy hero, whom we therefore commend to the protection of the fates.

One principal amusement which the company especially enjoyed, consisted in performing an extempore play, in which their late patrons and benefactors were ridiculed and mimicked. Some of the actors had attentively observed the

peculiarities of manner which belonged to their superiors, and the imitation of these was received by the company with tumults of applause; and when Philina produced from the secret records of her own experience, certain avowals of love which she had received, their joy and malicious laughter knew no bounds.

Wilhelm disapproved of their ingratitude, but they replied that their former patrons had deserved what they were receiving, inasmuch as their conduct towards such deserving people as themselves had not been the best imaginable: the neglect and disrespect, with which they had been treated, were now exaggerated, and as the jesting, derision and mimicry proceeded, the conduct of the whole party increased in injustice and severity.

"I could wish," observed Wilhelm, "that your observations were free from envy and selfishness, and that you would consent to see those persons and their circumstances in a proper point of view. It is a peculiar privilege to be elevated by high birth to an exalted station among mankind. The man whose existence is rendered easy by the wealth which he inherits, and who finds himself provided for from his very youth, with all the secondary advantages of life, will generally prize such qualifications above all others, and an existence which is furnished only with the rich endowments of nature, will not appear to him to possess any value. The conduct of the great towards their inferiors, and towards persons of their own class, is regulated by their possession of material advantages. Each one is valued in proportion to his title, his rank, his apparel, and his equipage; but his natural merits are inadequately esteemed."

The company received this speech with unbounded applause. They considered it too bad that merit should be so invariably neglected, and that in the great world there should be so little natural and cordial intercourse. Upon this subject they all became inconceivably eloquent.

"But we must not blame them on this account," said Wilhelm, "we should rather pity them! For they seldom have a right appreciation of that happiness which we recognize as the highest enjoyment that can flow from the inward wealth of nature. Poor creatures like ourselves can alone

enjoy the delights of friendship in their richest fulness. We cannot elevate our friends by favour, advance them by interest, or render them happy by means of presents. We possess nothing but ourselves. This whole self we must therefore bestow, and if it is intended to have any value, we must assure it to our friend for ever. What an enjoyment, what a happiness for both giver and receiver! In what a blessed situation are we placed by truth! It invests the transitory life of man with a heavenly certainty, it completes and perfects all our wealth."

Mignon had approached him as he was pronouncing these words; she embraced him with her little arms, and stood with her face resting against his bosom. He placed his hand upon her head, and continued thus. "How easy it is for a great man to win our hearts, and to make them his own. An agreeable, mild, and natural manner does wonders, and such a person possesses a thousand resources for retaining the attachments which he has once formed. All this is more rare and difficult to us, and therefore we naturally place a greater value upon whatever we require and accomplish. How affecting are the instances of attached servants, who sacrifice themselves for their masters! How admirably has Shakspeare depicted such characters! In such instances fidelity consists in the struggle of a noble soul to resemble its superior. By enduring attachment and love the servant becomes equal to his master, who would otherwise feel justified in regarding him as his hired slave. Yes, such virtues belong only to the inferior classes of mankind, they cannot dispense with them, and they invest the lower orders with a peculiar charm. Whoever can easily repay obligations, will be easily tempted to forget acknowledgments. In this sense I think I may assert, that though a great man may possess a friend, he cannot easily become one."

Mignon pressed still closer to him.

"Well," said one of the company, "we do not need the friendship of such people, and we have never sought it. But they ought better to understand the arts which they pretend to patronize. We were never appreciated when we acted in our best manner; everything went by complete partiality. Whoever enjoyed their favour, was sure to please; but they never bestowed their applause upon the

most deserving. It was strange how often mere folly and stupidity was received with satisfaction and approbation."

"When I make allowance," said Wilhelm, "for irony and malice, it seems to me that art in many things resembles love. And how can the man of the world with his habits of dissipation feel that thorough devotion to his pursuits, in which an artist must persist who would bring any thing to perfection, a feeling which must be shared by every one who would take that interest in his occupation which an artist would approve."

"Take my word for it, my friends, talents no less than virtues must be loved for their own sake, or utterly renounced. And yet neither the one nor the other are acknowledged or rewarded, unless they are practised, like a dangerous secret, in utter privacy."

"And in the meantime," exclaimed a voice from the corner, "we may all die of starvation, unless a proper judge discover our merits."

"Not exactly," answered Wilhelm, "I have invariably found that as long as a man lives and exerts himself, he can always procure a subsistence, even though it be not of the very choicest description. And of what can you complain? Have you not been unexpectedly favoured and befriended at a moment when our prospects seemed desperate? And now when we want nothing, does it ever occur to us that we ought to exert ourselves for our improvement, and to make progress in our art? We waste our time in trifling, and like school-boys we drive away every thought that may remind us of our lessons."

"In very truth," observed Philina, "that is undeniable. So let us select a play and act it this very moment. Each of us must do his best, as if he were in the presence of a large audience."

They wasted no time in thinking. The piece was selected —one of those plays which at that time were in high favour in Germany, but which are now absolutely forgotten. Some of the company whistled a symphony: the rest thought over their parts, and they forthwith commenced the performance, acting with the greatest attention, and succeeding beyond all expectation. They applauded each other in turn— they felt that they had seldom found such genuine enjoyment.

At the conclusion, they all felt happy, partly because their time had been well spent, partly because they experienced a feeling of self-satisfaction. Wilhelm was extravagant in his praises, and the conversation grew merry and agreeable.

"You would soon find," cried Wilhelm, "what progress we should make, if we continued to practise our art in this manner, and no longer confined our attention to mere learning by heart, to practising, and mechanical rehearsals, as if we were discharging a duty or pursuing some handicraft employment. How differently musicians act! with what delight and precision do they exert themselves together! what pains they take in the mere tuning of their instruments! how exact are they in keeping time,—and with what delicacy they express the strength and sweetness of their notes! None of their body would dream of endeavouring to excel by playing a loud accompaniment to the solo of another. Each one seeks to enter into the spirit and intention of the composer and to play his own part well, whether it be great or unimportant.

"Should we not also exert ourselves with the same particularity, in the practice of an art which is far more delicate than music, as our task consists in expressing the commonest and rarest emotions of mankind with taste and elegance. Nothing can be more reprehensible than to neglect our rehearsals, and to depend for the success of our performance upon the humour or accident of the moment. Our greatest pleasure and happiness should be found in seeking mutually to delight each other, and we should even prize the approbation of the public, only in proportion as we had previously sanctioned it amongst ourselves. Why is the leader of the orchestra more certain of his performance than the director of the stage? Because, in the former, each individual would blush for a mistake that could offend the outward ear. But how rarely do you find an actor ashamed of any mistake, whether pardonable or otherwise, which grossly offends the inward ear. I wish heartily that the stage were as narrow as the wire of a rope-dancer, that no unskilful person might venture thereupon, instead of being a place where every blunderer fancies himself qualified to make an exhibition."

The company approved of this speech, as each of them felt certain that the rebuke which it contained was not intended

for himself, as they had all but a short time previously performed so well. It was especially agreed that if they should remain together, they would continue the joint performances which they had already commenced. But they resolved that as their acting was voluntary and little else than a species of recreation, no director should have anything to do with it. Considering it as decided, that amongst good men the republican form of government is the best, they resolved that the office of manager should be filled by each of them in turn, that that functionary should be elected by the others, and that he should be assisted in his duties by a sort of little senate. They were so pleased with the suggestion, that they resolved to adopt it without delay.

"I have no objection," observed Melina, "if you wish to make a trial of your plan during our journey, I will cheerfully resign my own direction, until we arrive at some appointed place." He thought to economize by this means, and to throw a portion of the daily small expenses upon the little republic and the temporary manager. They accordingly consulted together how they might best settle the form of their intended government.

"As our kingdom will be perpetually travelling," said Laertes, "we shall have no dispute about boundaries."

They now proceeded to business and elected Wilhelm as their first manager. The senate was appointed and the women were allowed to have seats, and to vote—rules were proposed, rejected and adopted. In such amusements the time passed unheededly away, and as it had been spent pleasantly, they all considered that they had done something useful, and had by their new plan introduced more hopeful prospects for the improvement of the national stage.

CHAPTER III.

WILHELM observing the good dispositions of the company, now began to entertain hopes that he might be able to converse with them upon the poetic merits of the pieces they

performed. And, accordingly, when they met together on the following day, he reminded them that it was not sufficient that actors should take a mere cursory view of their parts, and form their opinions from first impressions, and declare that they afforded pleasure or dissatisfaction without inquiry.

"Spectators," he said, "may act in this way, as their object is rather to be moved and entertained, than to criticise accurately. But actors should be able to assign a reason for their censure or approbation—and how can they do this if they have not learned thoroughly to understand the sense and views of their author. I have lately detected in myself a disposition to judge of a piece from a single character, and not from its connection with the whole, and I should like to explain my meaning by an example, if you will kindly give me a patient hearing.

"You are acquainted with Shakspeare's incomparable Hamlet, from our reading it at the castle, an amusement which afforded us all so much delight. We contemplated at the time, performing the piece, and I intended, without well knowing what I was about, to act the part of the Prince. I conceived that I was studying the character, whilst I was committing to memory the strongest passages, the soliloquies and those scenes in which force of soul, elevation of spirit and vehemence chiefly predominate, in fine where the agitation of the mind displays itself with affecting expressiveness.

"I thought, moreover, that I was completely entering into the spirit of the part, when I took upon myself the load of deep melancholy, under which my prototype was labouring, and I followed him through the strange labyrinth of his many humours and singularities. In this way I learned and practised, until I thought that I should at length gradually identify myself with my hero. But as I proceeded, I found the representation of the character becoming more difficult, and I thought it almost impossible to take a complete view of the poet's conception. I now went through the piece uninterruptedly, but even in this way I found much that I could not comprehend. At one time the characters, and at another their delineation seemed contradictory, and I almost despaired of finding a proper hue in which I could pourtray

my whole part with all its varieties and shadows. I struggled long with these misconceptions, until at length I thought I might attain my object by a different method.

"I commenced accordingly to examine every indication of Hamlet's character which he had exhibited previous to his father's death. I noted every point which seemed independent of that sad event, unconnected with the appalling circumstances that followed, I reflected upon what this interesting youth had now become, and what he might have been, if no such events had taken place.

"At once delicate and noble, this royal flower had bloomed under the immediate influence of majesty. His perceptions of virtue and of princely worth, together with an appreciation of whatever was good and dignified, united with a consciousness of his high birth, were developed in him simultaneously. He was a prince, an hereditary prince, and he was ambitious to reign only that good men might continue to be good without hindrance. Agreeable in form, polished by nature, affable from the heart, he was intended to be a model for youth and the joy of the world.

"His love for Ophelia was not the result of warm passion, but the silent expression of his sweet wants. His taste for knightly pursuits was not quite natural to him, but required to be excited and kept alive by the praises bestowed upon a rival. Of pure thoughts himself, he appreciated what was honourable in others, and he could prize the repose which an upright spirit enjoys in the confidence of a friend. Up to a certain point, he could value what was good and excellent in the arts and sciences. Vulgarity was offensive to him, and if hatred could find a place in his tender soul, it was only that he might despise the whole tribe of false and hypocritical courtiers, and convert them into subjects of derision. He was open in his conduct, simple in his manners, neither satisfied with idleness nor too anxious for occupation. He carried his academical habits to the court. He possessed more mirth of humour than of heart, he was a good companion, pliant, discreet and punctilious, and was able to forgive and to forget an injury, but he could not tolerate those who overstepped the boundaries of honesty, propriety and virtue.

"When we read the play together again, you will be able

to judge if I am now on the right track. I hope, at all events, that I shall be able to strengthen my opinion by illustrations from the author."

This hasty sketch was received with general applause. His audience were of opinion that Hamlet's conduct could now be explained satisfactorily, and they approved this mode of penetrating into the spirit of an author. Each of them proposed to study a play upon this plan, in order properly to unfold the meaning of the writer.

CHAPTER IV.

THE company were compelled to remain in their present abode for some days, and in the meantime some of them were amused with certain agreeable adventures. Laertes, for instance, became the especial favourite of a lady who possessed some property in the neighbourhood, but he behaved towards her in a cold and heartless manner, and thus drew upon himself the malicious satire of Philina. She seized this opportunity of relating to Wilhelm the unhappy adventure which had rendered Laertes so great an enemy to the sex. "And who can blame him," she exclaimed, "for hating a sex which has used him so badly, and obliged him to drink in one concentrated potion, all the evils which men can apprehend from women? Only imagine—within the short space of four-and-twenty hours he has been lover, bridegroom, husband, cuckold, invalid, and widower. I do not see how a man's fate could be worse."

Laertes ran out of the room, half laughing and half angry, and Philina commenced in her jocose manner to relate the story; telling how Laertes, a youth of eighteen, as soon as he had joined the company of actors, had found amongst them a pretty girl of fourteen, who was on the point of leaving them with her father, as the latter had had a misunderstanding with the manager. He fell mortally in love at first sight, used every exertion to induce the father to stay, and finally promised to marry his daughter. After a

few pleasant hours of courtship he was married, had passed a happy bridal night, in return for which she on the following morning, whilst he was engaged at the rehearsal, had honoured him with a pair of horns. He had hastened home in the excess of his tenderness, and found a former lover in his place. This had caused him to behave like a demon, he challenged both the lover and the father, and himself sustained a grievous wound. Both father and daughter thereupon made their escape the same night, and Laertes remained behind to mourn over his double wound. Ill luck induced him to apply to the worst of doctors, and the poor wretch had got out of the scrape with blackened teeth and weeping eyes. He was deserving of pity, as in other respects he really was the best creature in the world. But I am sorry above all things that the poor simpleton hates the whole sex —for how can any man hate them and live?"

Melina interrupted her with the announcement that every thing had been prepared for the journey, and that on the following morning they were to depart. He handed her a plan of the mode in which they were to travel.

"If some kind friend will only take me in his lap," said Philina, "I am content; no matter how much we may be squeezed; I can put up with it."

"It is of no consequence," observed Laertes, who now entered.

"It is too bad!" exclaimed Wilhelm, as he hastened away. His money enabled him to hire a very comfortable carriage which Melina had declined to engage. A new arrangement of the party now took place, and they were congratulating themselves upon the prospect of a pleasant journey, when the alarming news arrived that a party of military volunteers had been seen upon the road, from whom nothing good could be expected.

The news created some sensation in the town, though it was in its nature uncertain and ambiguous. According to the position which the armies occupied, it seemed impossible that a hostile corps could have marched forward, or that any friendly one could have remained behind so far. Every one seemed anxious to represent the danger as truly appalling, and advised the party to take another road.

Most of the latter were for this reason exceedingly

alarmed, and when in conformity with their new republican constitution, the members of the society were convened to consider this extraordinary case, they were almost unanimously of opinion that it would be better to shun the danger by remaining where they were, or avoid it by taking some other road.

But Wilhelm, who felt no alarm himself, considered it shameful to abandon a plan which they had adopted after so much consideration, upon a mere rumour of peril. He endeavoured to encourage the rest, and his reasons were manly and convincing.

"The whole thing is a mere report," he observed, "and how many such reports must be circulated during a war! All sensible persons say that danger is extremely improbable, and almost impossible. And ought we in a matter of so much importance to be swayed by a mere doubtful rumour? The route which the Count selected for us, and for which our passports are made out, is the shortest and also the best. It leads to the town where we shall see our acquaintances and friends and hope to meet a favourable reception. The other route will also take us thither, but what a circuit must we make, and over what bad roads must we travel! We can scarcely indulge hopes of prosecuting our journey at all at this late season, and how much time and money shall we in the meanwhile squander!" He said so much and presented the subject in so many advantageous points of view, that their apprehensions began to diminish and their courage to increase. He persuaded them so strongly of the discipline of regular soldiers, and described the marauders and itinerant rabble in such contemptible colours, representing the danger itself as so exciting and pleasant, that the spirits of the whole party were cheered and encouraged.

Laertes had agreed with him from the beginning, and he promised that nothing should induce him to change his sentiments. The other actors expressed their views in their own manner. Philina laughed at them all, and Madame Melina who, notwithstanding her advanced pregnancy, still retained her high courage, considered the proposition as heroic. For this reason Melina himself who thought it possible that he might save something by taking the shorter

road as he had originally intended, did not oppose the general voice, and the plan was accordingly adopted.

They now began to prepare for defending themselves against every accident. Huge knives were purchased which were suspended by straps across their shoulders. Wilhelm in addition had a pair of pistols in his girdle; Laertes carried a gun, and thus equipped they set out merrily upon their journey.

The drivers of the carriages proposed on the second day that they should rest for awhile, at the hour of noon, at a certain woody spot upon the hills. The town was at no great distance, and this road was generally taken in favourable weather.

The day was fine, and all parties agreed to the proposal. Wilhelm hastened on foot across the hill, and every one who met him wondered at his singular appearance. He proceeded through the wood with quick and contented steps; Laertes followed him, and whistled as he went, while the ladies retained their seats in the carriage. Mignon, however, ran along at his side wearing the knife of which she was proud, as she refused to lay it aside when the company were arming themselves. She had ornamented her hat with a pearl necklace, one of Mariana's relics which Wilhelm still retained. Young Friedrich carried Laertes' gun. The harper had the most peaceable look of the whole party. His long garment was gathered up and fastened to his girdle, that he might walk with less restraint. He leaned upon a knotty staff, his harp having been left in the carriage.

When they had with some little difficulty ascended the hill, they recognised the appointed place by the splendid beech trees with which it was at once environed and shaded. An open meadow softly sloping invited them to repose, whilst a secluded well offered the most delicious refreshment, and in the distance, through openings in the mountains, and across the woods, they beheld a lovely landscape. Villages and mills adorned the plain, and far away in the perspective a chain of gradually ascending hills awakened feelings of hope within the mind, as they softly closed around the landscape.

Those who arrived first took possession of the place, they lay down in the shade, lighted a fire, and amusing themselves

with singing, they awaited the appearance of the rest of the party. They arrived gradually and seemed delighted with the place, the beautiful weather, and the lovely scene.

CHAPTER V.

Within doors they had often enjoyed many a happy and convivial hour, but they all felt a keener pleasure now, the freedom of the open air and the beauty of the spot tending to elevate and purify their feelings. They were at once more friendly towards each other, and they all wished that it were possible to spend their whole lives in so charming an abode. They envied the whole tribe of hunters, charcoal-burners, and wood-cutters who are compelled by their pursuits in life to reside amid such happy scenery, but beyond all things they were enchanted with the idea of a gipsey life. They envied those mysterious beings who in a state of blissful idleness were privileged to enjoy all the wonderful charms of nature, and they felt a pleasure in resembling them to some extent.

The women had in the meantime commenced to boil potatoes and to unpack and lay out their store of provisions. Some pots were standing by the fire, and the different members of the company lay in groups beneath the trees and beeches. Their peculiar attire and their various weapons gave them a wild appearance. The horses were grazing near them, and if the vehicles could have been concealed, the appearance of the whole party would have been romantic even to illusion.

Wilhelm thrilled with a novel feeling of rapture. He imagined that they were a wandering colony, of whom he was the leader. And with this idea he addressed each person and clothed this fancy of the hour in as poetical a garb as possible. The pleasure of the party increased momently, they ate, drank, and made merry, and declared incessantly that they had never enjoyed greater happiness.

The younger members of the society now proposed some

active amusement. Wilhelm and Laertes accordingly took their swords and began to practise as if engaged at a theatrical rehearsal. They went through the duel in which Hamlet and his antagonist come to so tragical an end. They both thought that in this important scene they ought not to thrust at random, as actors generally do upon the stage; they wished to shew in the representation how they might give the critic a proper lesson in the art of fencing. A circle was made—they fought with skill and ardour, and the interest of the spectators was every moment on the increase.

Suddenly a shot was heard in the neighbouring thicket, it was succeeded by another; the company dispersed in alarm. Next moment a body of armed men rushed forward to the place where the horses were grazing at no great distance from the heavily laden carriages.

The women screamed, our heroes threw away their swords, seized their pistols, and hastened towards the robbers with loud threats, demanding satisfaction for their daring conduct.

As the answer was the sharp reply of a couple of shots, Wilhelm fired his pistol at a curly-headed youth who had mounted the carriage and was cutting the ropes which secured the luggage. He fell down wounded. Neither did Laertes miss his man, and thus encouraged they both drew their swords, when several of the robbers rushed upon them with curses and imprecations, discharged their pistols at them, and attacked them with their weapons. They defended themselves bravely, calling to the rest of their companions, and inciting them to make a bold resistance. Suddenly Wilhelm lost the sight of day and all recollection of what had taken place. He fell senseless from a shot which struck him between the breast and the left arm, receiving at the same moment a blow from a sword which cut through his hat and almost penetrated to his skull. He was afterwards informed by others of the sad termination of the adventure.

When he opened his eyes he found himself in a strange condition. The first object which he perceived through the obscurity which still overspread his eyes, was Philina's face bent closely over his. He felt weak, and making an exertion to rise he fell into Philina's lap. She was sitting on

the grass. She had pressed the head of the surviving youth softly to her bosom, and had made an easy couch for him within her arms. Mignon was kneeling at his feet with bloody and dishevelled hair, and she embraced him with a flood of tears.

When Wilhelm observed his blood-stained clothes, he inquired in broken accents where he was, and what had occurred to them all? Philina entreated him to remain quiet. "All the others," she said, "are safe, and no one is wounded but you and Laertes." She refused to give him any further information, requesting earnestly that he would continue quiet, as his wounds had been but hastily and slightly dressed. He stretched out his hand to Mignon and inquired why the locks of the child were stained with blood, fancying that she also had been wounded.

To tranquillize him, Philina related how this grateful little creature when she had seen her friend wounded, could think in the confusion of nothing else with which to stop the rushing of the blood, but of her own hair. It was flowing loosely over her shoulders, and with this she sought to staunch the wound, but was soon obliged to desist from the vain attempt. When subsequently they bound up the gash with lint and moss, Philina kindly lent her own handkerchief for the purpose.

Wilhelm observed that Philina was seated with her back against her own trunk, which was well secured and locked, and appeared to be still uninjured. He inquired if the rest of the party had been equally fortunate in saving their property? She answered with a shrug of the shoulders and a look across the meadow, where a medley of broken boxes, fragments of trunks, ripped up carpet bags, and a multitude of other articles lay in promiscuous confusion. There was no other person in the place, and the strange group I have described remained alone in the solitude.

Wilhelm soon learned more than he was pleased to hear. Such of the party as were capable of making any resistance had been quickly terrified and overpowered. Some of them had fled and others had looked on in terror. The drivers, who had fought hard to save their horses, were thrown down and tied, and in a short time everything was rifled and carried off. The luckless travellers as soon as they were relieved

from the fear of death, began to mourn for the loss they had sustained, and hastened with all possible speed to the nearest village, taking Laertes, who had been but slightly wounded, with them, and carrying away but few fragments of their property. The harper had placed his injured harp against a tree, and had accompanied them to the village, that he might fetch a surgeon and return as quickly as possible to the relief of his benefactor, whom he had left at the point of death.

CHAPTER VI.

In the meantime our three unhappy adventurers remained in their state of perplexity and distress, as no one returned to their assistance. Evening approached and darkness was coming rapidly on. The indifference of Philina began to change to anxiety; Mignon ran restlessly about, and the impatience of the child increased every instant. At length when pursuant to their wishes a body of men approached, the circumstance occasioned new alarm. They distinctly heard the sound of a troop of horses coming by the road which they had lately travelled over, and they dreaded now lest a fresh company of uninvited guests should visit the scene of action and possess themselves of all that remained.

They were, however, most agreeably surprised to see a young lady issue from the thicket, riding on a grey charger, accompanied by an elderly gentleman and some younger cavaliers, and followed by several grooms, servants, and a troop of hussars.

Philina, who stared at this unexpected appearance, was about to cry out, and entreat the fair Amazon to come to their assistance, when the latter, looking with astonishment at the extraordinary group, checked the speed of her horse, rode slowly up to them, and finally halted. She inquired eagerly after the wounded youth, whose position, as he reposed in the lap of this thoughtless Samaritan, appeared to her more than usually strange.

"Is he your husband?" inquired she of Philina. "Nothing

more than a kind friend," answered the latter, in a tone by no means agreeable to Wilhelm. He had fixed his eyes upon the soft, noble, calm, sympathizing features of the stranger, and he thought that he had never seen any thing more dignified or lovely. Her figure was concealed by the ample folds of a man's cloak, which she appeared to have borrowed from one of her attendants to protect her from the chill evening air.

Her companions had by this time joined her. Some of them alighted, the lady did the same, and she inquired with kind interest into all the circumstances of the accident which had befallen the travellers, asking particularly about the wounds of the youth, who was reclining so helplessly before her. She then turned quickly round, and accompanied by the old gentleman before-mentioned, she went towards some carriages which were slowly ascending the hill, until at length they drew up at the scene of action.

The young lady having stood at the door of one of the carriages for a short time conversing with the inmates, a gentleman of short stature stepped out, and was conducted by her to our wounded hero. A small box and a leathern case of instruments, which he carried in his hand, evidently shewed that he was a surgeon. His manners were coarse rather than polished, but his hand was light and his assistance welcome.

He made a close examination of the sufferer, and having pronounced that his wounds were not dangerous, he proposed to dress them upon the spot, and recommended that the youth should then be taken to the next village.

The anxiety of the young lady seemed to increase. "See," she exclaimed, after she had paced backwards and forwards several times; "see how they have ill-used him! And he is suffering for our sakes!" Wilhelm overheard these words, but could not comprehend their meaning. She still walked restlessly about; she seemed unable to leave the wounded man, and yet she feared to violate decorum by remaining any longer, as they had now commenced, with some difficulty, to undress him. The surgeon had already cut open his right sleeve, when the old gentleman approached, and in a serious tone urged the necessity of continuing their journey. Wilhelm kept his eyes fixed upon the lady, and was so cap-

tivated with her look, that he scarcely felt what had happened to him.

Philina, in the meantime, had risen from the ground to kiss the hand of the gracious lady. As they stood together, our friend thought he had never seen so great a contrast. Philina had never appeared to him in so unfavourable a light. It seemed to him that she ought not to approach so near to that noble creature, much less to touch her.

The lady made many inquiries of Philina, but in a low tone of voice. At length she returned to the old gentleman, who was standing by unmoved, and said, "My dear uncle, may I be generous at your expense?" Saying this, she divested herself of the cloak, with the evident intention of bestowing it upon the stripped and wounded youth.

Wilhelm, who had been hitherto spell bound by the kind influence of her looks, was now astonished at the charm of her lovely figure. She drew near and softly spread the cloak over him. He made an effort to open his lips and to stammer forth his thanks, when the strong impression of her presence produced such an effect upon his mind, that suddenly it seemed as if her head was encircled with rays, and a brilliant light spread itself over her whole form. The surgeon at this moment caused him to feel a keen sensation of pain, by his endeavours to extract the bullet from his wound. From the eyes of the fainting youth his angel gradually disappeared, he lost all consciousness, and on coming to his senses, the whole train of horsemen and carriages, as well as the beautiful lady and her attendants, had completely disappeared.

CHAPTER VII.

WILHELM'S wounds being dressed, the surgeon took his departure just as the old harper was seen approaching, accompanied by a crowd of peasants. They soon constructed a species of litter from the boughs of some trees which they cut down, and interwoven with twigs, and under the guidance of a mounted huntsman, whom the noble party had left behind them, they carried him softly down the mountain. The

harper, silent and buried in thought, carried his broken harp along with him, some of the attendants took charge of Philina's trunk, while she herself followed with her bundle. Mignon meanwhile ran on through bush and thicket, at one moment preceding, and at another accompanying the party, and ever casting a look of longing anxiety upon her wounded protector.

Enveloped in the warm cloak, Wilhelm lay peacefully upon the litter. An electric glow appeared to flow from the fine wool of the garment, and to penetrate his whole system; in short, he experienced the most delightful sensations. The lovely owner of the cloak had worked upon his feelings with extraordinary power. He once more saw the garment falling from her shoulders, and her beautiful form enveloped in radiance seemed standing before him, and his soul pursued her departing footsteps as she disappeared amidst the surrounding rocks and forests.

Night was closing in when the party at length reached the village and drew up at the door of the hotel where the rest of the company had already arrived, and where, sunk in despondency and gloom, they were bemoaning the grievous losses which they had sustained. The solitary little apartment which they occupied, was quite filled with people. Some were lying upon straw, others had taken possession of the benches or squeezed themselves behind the stove, whilst in a neighbouring chamber, Madame Melina was painfully expecting her accouchement. Fright had hastened the catastrophe, and with nothing more than the assistance of the hostess, a young and inexperienced woman, no very favourable result could be expected.

There was a general expression of discontent when the persons who had just arrived inquired if they could be admitted. Every one clamorously asserted that it was by Wilhelm's advice alone, and under his especial guidance, they had undertaken this dangerous journey and exposed themselves to such a disaster. The fault of the whole misadventure was laid upon him; they therefore crowded round the door to oppose his entrance, exclaiming that he must go elsewhere for shelter. Philina met with a still harsher reception, and the harper and Mignon had to endure their share of the general discontent.

The huntsman did not long bear this contention with patience. The care of the forsaken party had been entrusted to him by his beautiful mistress. He poured out a torrent of oaths and threats upon the whole company, commanding them to retire and to make way for the reception of the others. They were at length gradually pacified. He prepared a sort of bed for Wilhelm upon a table which he had pushed into a corner. Philina placed her trunk near to it and took her seat there. Each one arranged himself as comfortably as he could, and the huntsman retired to see if he could not find more comfortable quarters for the young married couple.

He had scarcely left the house before the discontent again broke out, and a scene of general altercation ensued. They all, in turn, related and exaggerated the losses they had sustained, and blamed their own rashness for their severe misfortunes. They made no secret of their malicious joy at Wilhelm's wounds, they sneered also at Philina, and adverted to the criminal means by which she had succeeded in saving her trunk. One might infer from a multitude of sarcasms and ill-natured inuendoes, that during the contest and the plundering which had taken place, she had insinuated herself into the good graces of the Captain of the band, and had induced him by certain arts and contrivances, to procure the restoration of her trunk whole and intact. They insinuated that she had been missing for a considerable time. To all these ill-natured observations she made no reply. She merely clanked the huge padlocks of her trunk, to convince her accusers more forcibly of its presence, and to increase their desperation by a display of her own good fortune.

CHAPTER VIII.

Although Wilhelm had been weakened by the loss of blood, and had been tranquillised in mind by the visit of that guardian angel, he was however unable to bear the harsh and unjust observations which his continued silence had en-

couraged the discontented party to utter against him. At length, he felt strong enough to sit up and to remonstrate against their harsh conduct towards him, who had been their friend and leader. He raised up his bandaged head, and supporting himself with some difficulty by leaning against the wall, he spoke his sentiments as follows.

"On account of the pain, which you suffer from your losses, I forgive you for accusing me at a time when I rather merit your compassion, and for opposing and resisting me upon the first occasion that I have looked to you for help. For the services and kindnesses which I have hitherto rendered you, I have found a sufficient reward in your gratitude and in your friendly demeanour towards myself—but do not constrain my thoughts, do not oblige me to retrace in memory, all that I have done for you—the remembrance would be too painful. Accident led me to you, circumstances and a secret inclination have kept me with you. I have shared in all your labours and your pleasures, and my slight abilities have always been at your command. If you now censure me with severity for the accident which has befallen us, do you not remember that the first proposal to take the road we followed was made by strangers, that the project was considered by all parties, and was approved by each of you as heartily as by myself. If our journey had terminated successfully, each of you would have praised the happy suggestion which had advised this road in preference to any other, he would have felt proud of reminding us of our deliberations and of the vote which he gave, but now you would hold me alone responsible and compel me to endure a censure, to which I should willingly submit, if my own clear conscience did not pronounce me innocent, and if indeed I might not boldly appeal to yourselves. If you have any accusation to prefer against me, make it distinctly, and I shall be able to defend myself, but if you have no well-grounded charge to allege, maintain a proper silence, and do not pain me at a moment when I have so much need of rest."

In place of returning an answer, the maidens all began to weep and to recount their losses circumstantially. Melina was in a state of the greatest excitement, for his losses in truth had been the most severe, greater indeed than we may

venture to describe in detail. He paced the apartment like a madman, knocked his head against the wall, and swore and scolded in the most unseemly manner, and when the landlady came from an adjoining apartment at this particular moment, bearing the information that his wife had been delivered of a still-born child, he broke out into the most violent fury, and in conjunction with him, the whole household simultaneously howled, screamed, roared and bellowed.

Wilhelm, who was wounded to the very soul with a feeling of sympathy for their sufferings and pity for their debased sentiments, felt the whole vigour of his mind aroused, notwithstanding the weakness of his body. "However much I may pity you," he exclaimed, "I fear I shall be compelled to despise you,—no calamity can justify us in loading a guiltless man with reproaches. If I have participated in the error of this step, I have also shared in the consequent suffering. I lie here bleeding from my wounds. And if the company has sustained a loss, mine has been far greater than theirs. All the wardrobe and the decorations of which we have been plundered belonged to me, for you have not yet paid me for them, Herr Melina, and I here fully acquit you from the debt."

"It is easy," replied Melina, "to bestow what none of us will ever see again. Your money lay at the bottom of my wife's trunk, and if you have lost it, you alone are to blame I wish, indeed, that that were the extent of our calamity!" Hereupon he commenced to stamp, to scold, and to scream anew. They all recalled to memory the gay clothes which they had received from the wardrobe of the Count, and mourned the loss of the buckles, the watches, the snuff-boxes, and the hats, for which Melina had bargained so successfully with the chief valet. Each one of them also remembered his own private, but not less valuable treasures. They all looked with rage at Philina's trunk, and gave Wilhelm to understand that it was in truth no bad stroke of policy to have connected himself with that fair personage, and saved his goods by means of her good fortune.

"Do you suppose then," he exclaimed at length, "that I shall retain any thing exclusively to myself so long as you are in want? And is this the first time that I shall have honestly shared with you in time of need? Open the trunk,

and all that belongs to me I will give up for the general welfare."

"The trunk is mine," exclaimed Philina, "and I will not open it till I please. The trifles which belong to you and which I have saved for you, are but of small value, and would realize but little if sold to the most honest of Jews. Think of yourself, of what your cure may cost you, and of all the accidents which may happen to you in a strange country."

"Philina," answered Wilhelm, "you must retain nothing that belongs to me, and the little of which you speak, will suffice to extricate us from our more pressing difficulties. But man possesses many things with which he may assist his friends, besides actual money. All the powers I possess shall be devoted to the service of these hapless persons, who assuredly when they reflect, must repent of their present conduct. Yes," he continued, "I feel that you are in want, and as far as I am able, I will render you assistance. Confide in me once more; compose yourselves for a moment and accept what I promise. Which of you will be the representative of the whole company and accept my engagement in the name of all?"

He held out his hand and exclaimed, "I promise not to forsake you, not to abandon you, until each of you shall have doubly and trebly repaired the loss which he has sustained, till the lamentable condition into which you have fallen shall be fully forgotten or exchanged for a more enviable lot."

He held his hand still stretched out, but none of them would take it. "Once again, I promise;" he exclaimed, and sunk back exhausted upon his pillow. They all continued silent. They felt ashamed—but were not comforted,—and Philina, seated upon her trunk, employed herself in cracking nuts, a store of which she had found in her pocket.

CHAPTER IX.

The huntsman soon returned accompanied by several people, and they prepared now to remove the wounded youth. The clergyman of the village had been persuaded to receive

the young couple into his house. Philina's trunk was therefore brought out, and she followed with a natural air of dignity. Mignon ran on before, and upon Wilhelm's arrival at the clergyman's house, a large bed which had long been devoted to receiving guests and persons of distinction was assigned to him. It was now discovered that his wound had opened afresh, and was bleeding profusely. It was necessary to prepare a new bandage. The patient soon fell into a state of fever; Philina attended him devotedly, and when she was overcome by fatigue, her place was taken by the harper, whilst Mignon took up her quarters in a corner of the apartment, with the firm resolution of watching him unweariedly.

On the following morning, when Wilhelm was somewhat refreshed, he learned from the huntsman that the persons who had assisted them yesterday, had left their country seat a short time previously, to avoid the movements of the hostile armies, with the intention of retiring to some quiet spot, until peace should be restored. He communicated the name of the old gentleman and also that of his niece, and informed him of the place to which, in the first instance, they were going, and he stated moreover, that the young lady had specially enjoined him to take care of the destitute Wilhelm.

The arrival of the surgeon interrupted the warm declarations of gratitude in which our friend was giving expression to his feelings. He made a particular examination of his patient's wounds, and assured him that they would heal rapidly if Wilhelm would only abstain from all excitement.

The huntsman having now departed, Philina stated that he had given her a purse containing twenty louis d'ors, that he had also remunerated the clergyman for his lodging, and had left money to defray the surgeon's bill. As she was looked upon as Wilhelm's wife, she requested permission once for all to act in that capacity, and she would under no circumstances permit another nurse to be engaged.

"Philina," said Wilhelm, "I am beyond measure indebted to you for the kindness which you have evinced towards me in the disaster that has befallen us, but I am unwilling that the weight of my obligations should be increased. I am unhappy so long as you are near me, for I know not how I can repay you for your trouble. Give me my things which

you have saved for me in your trunk—join the rest of the company—find out another apartment—accept my thanks and my gold watch as an inadequate testimony of my gratitude, and leave me—your presence is more distressing to me than you can easily believe."

When he had ended, she burst into a loud fit of laughter. "You are a silly mortal," she cried, "and will never have sense. I know better than you what is good for you. I shall remain, and I do not intend to stir from this spot. I have never counted much upon the gratitude of mankind, and I do not therefore expect much from you—but if I feel a kindness for you, why should you complain?"

She accordingly remained, and soon grew into favour with the clergyman and his family; her disposition was ever cheerful, she was perpetually making little presents, she could humour every one according to his fancy, and yet she always contrived to have her own way. Wilhelm, under all circumstances, found himself comfortable. The surgeon, an ignorant but not an unskilful man, allowed nature to take its own course, and the patient was soon in a fair way of recovery. Anxiously did he desire this consummation, that he might be at liberty to pursue his plans and to gratify his wishes.

Incessantly he thought of that event which had made an indelible impression upon his mind. Again he saw the beautiful amazon riding from the thicket, approaching towards him, alighting from her horse, walking to and fro, and endeavouring to serve him. He saw the garment in which she was enveloped fall from her shoulders, and her countenance and her figure beaming with a bright radiance. All his dreams of youth were concentrated upon this image. He fancied that at length he was permitted to behold with his own eyes the heroic Clorinda, and he once more dwelt in imagination on that royal youth, whose sick bed the beautiful sympathizing Princess had watched with so much silent modesty.

"In youth and in sleep," he would often say to himself, "may not the images of coming destiny hover round us, and become mysteriously visible to our unimpeded sight? May not the seeds of future events be already scattered by the hand of fate, and may it not be possible for us to enjoy a foretaste of the fruits which we hope one day to gather?"

His sick couch afforded him an opportunity of renewing

those visions a thousand times. Often would he recall the tones of that sweet voice, and envy Philina, who had kissed that helping hand. Often did the whole incident appear to him as a dream, and he would have considered it a very fiction if the cloak had not remained with him as evidence of the reality of the vision.

He bestowed the greatest possible care upon this garment, and yet he felt an indescribable anxiety to wear it. As soon as he arose, therefore, he put it on, but trembled during the entire day, lest it might in any manner receive the slightest stain or injury.

CHAPTER X.

Laertes visited his friend—he had not been present at that animated scene in the hotel, having been confined to bed at the time in an upper chamber. He was altogether indifferent about the loss which he had sustained, and he found relief in his customary exclamation of "What does it signify?" He related many droll stories of the whole company, and accused Madame Melina of lamenting the loss of her daughter, solely because she could not now enjoy the pleasure of having a Mathilda christened. As for her husband, it now appeared that he had all along possessed a large supply of money, and had by no means needed the advance of which he had defrauded Wilhelm. It was Melina's intention to set out by the first public conveyance, and to ask Wilhelm for a letter of introduction to the manager Serlo, in whose company, since the present undertaking had proved a failure, he was anxious to secure an engagement.

Mignon had been very quiet for some days, and when she was questioned upon the subject, she confessed with reluctance that her right arm was dislocated. "You have to thank your own rashness for it," cried Philina, and she then narrated how the child, when she saw her friend in danger, had drawn her sword and attacked the robbers fiercely. At length one of them had seized her by the arm and forced her away. She was scolded for not having spoken of her injury before, but it was easily seen that she had been afraid of the

surgeon, who had hitherto always taken her for a boy. They applied immediate remedies for her relief, and she was compelled to place her arm in a sling. She was dissatisfied, however, with this arrangement, as she was compelled to abandon to Philina the greater part of the nursing of Wilhelm, an alternative for which that pretty sinner was both thankful and attentive.

One morning when Wilhelm awoke, he found himself in strange proximity to her. In his restless sleep he had changed his position, and was lying at the foot of his large bed. Philina was reclining across the upper part of it—she seemed to have fallen asleep while she was sitting upon the bed and reading. A book had fallen from her hand, she was leaning back and her head was resting close to his breast, over which her fair and dishevelled hair was flowing in streams. The disorder of sleep had enlivened her charms more than art or design could have done, and an innocent smile of repose had spread over her soft countenance. He looked at her for a considerable time, and seemed to censure himself for the pleasure with which he surveyed her. He was engaged thus for some time, when she began to awake. He closed his eyes softly, but he could not help still looking towards her as she rose from the bed, and commenced to arrange her person and retired to make preparations for the breakfast.

The whole company of actors had in turn paid their visits to Wilhelm, and had asked for money and letters of recommendation with more or less impatience or rudeness. All their requests had been complied with, notwithstanding the remonstrances of Philina, who vainly assured our friend that the huntsman had left a considerable sum for these people, and that they were only imposing on his kindness. An angry altercation now arose between them, and Wilhelm signified once for all, that she must now join the rest of the company and seek her fortune with Serlo.

She lost her temper for a few minutes, but quickly recovering herself, she replied, "If I only had my fair-haired favourite again, I should not care much for any of you." She alluded to Friedrich, who had disappeared on the field of battle, and had not since been heard of.

On the following morning, Mignon informed Wilhelm

before he rose, that Philina had gone away during the night, having previously left all that belonged to our friend very neatly laid out in the adjoining chamber. He was distressed at her absence, for in her he was deprived of a faithful attendant and a cheerful companion, and he had now lost the habit of living alone. Mignon, however, soon filled up the blank.

As long as the frivolous Philina had continued to attend the patient with assiduous care, little Mignon had gradually withdrawn herself, remaining silent and absorbed in her own thoughts; but now when the field was again clear, she was once more zealous in her attentions and her love, and was both anxious to serve and eager to entertain Wilhelm.

CHAPTER XI.

WILHELM'S improvement was rapid, and he hoped that he would be able in a few days to set out upon his intended journey. He was determined no longer to lead an aimless indecisive life, and resolved that his future career should have some precise object in view. But, in the first place, he was anxious to seek out the party of travellers from whom he had received such timely assistance, in order that he might give expression to his gratitude, and then he would hasten to his friend the manager, that he might provide for the luckless company, and at the same time he would visit the commercial friends, to whom he had letters of introduction, and transact the business which had been entrusted to him. He hoped that fortune would continue to smile upon him as before, and afford him an opportunity, by some favourable speculation, to repair his losses and supply his empty treasury.

His anxiety once more to behold his beautiful deliverer increased daily. Accordingly he took counsel with the clergyman about his intended route. The latter was skilled in geographical and statistical knowledge, and had a respectable collection of books and maps. They looked for the place where the noble family intended to reside during the continuance of the war, and they sought for some information concerning the family itself, but the place was not marked in

any geography or map, and the books of heraldry made no mention of their name.

Wilhelm grew impatient, and having mentioned the cause of his uneasiness, the harper stated that he had reason to believe that the huntsman had been actuated by some secret motive for concealing all authentic information.

Wilhelm, however, who now thought that he was really in the neighbourhood of his lovely benefactress, hoped to obtain some news of her, from the harper, if the latter were commissioned to make inquiries. But in this expectation he was disappointed. In spite of all his diligence, the old man could obtain no information. A variety of rapid movements and unexpected marches had lately taken place in the neighbourhood, no one had paid any attention to a particular travelling party, and the aged messenger, fearing to be taken for a Jewish spy, was obliged to return without the olive branch, to the abode of his lord and master. He gave an accurate account of his commission, from an anxiety to dispel all suspicion of neglect or indifference. He sought by every means to assuage the grief of our friend, thought of all that the huntsman had communicated to him, and offered many suggestions of his own, thereby clearly establishing one fact, which enabled Wilhelm to explain certain mysterious expressions of his beautiful benefactress.

It appeared that the band of robbers had intended to attack, not the wandering comedians, but the party of noble travellers, with whom they had naturally expected to find a large supply of gold and treasures, and of whose movements they must have received accurate information. It appeared doubtful, however, whether the attack should be ascribed to a party of soldiers or to mere freebooters and robbers. But a lucky accident, which saved the rich and respectable party, had brought the poor actors first to the scene of action, and they suffered the fate which had been intended for the others. It was to this circumstance that the expression of the young lady referred, which Wilhelm still accurately remembered. And if he now felt happy and contented that a benevolent genius had destined him for sacrifice, in order to preserve so perfect a being, he was nevertheless reduced to despair by the thought, that all hope of seeing her again had for ever vanished.

His strange emotion was still farther increased, by the resemblance which he thought he had discovered between the Countess and his beautiful unknown. They resembled each other as sisters may do, of whom it is impossible to say which is the elder and which is the younger, for they appear to be twins.

His remembrance of the amiable Countess was indescribably sweet. With delight he recalled her image to his memory. But the figure of the noble Amazon quickly intervened, one vision disappearing and changing into the other, without permitting him to retain firmly the impress of either.

How astonishing then must the resemblance between their handwriting have appeared to him! He had preserved in his portfolio a charming song, which had been written for him by the Countess, and in the pocket of the cloak, he had found a little note, containing kind inquiries about the health of an uncle.

Wilhelm felt convinced that his preserver had written this note upon her journey, and had transmitted it from one apartment of their hotel to another, and that it had been placed in the pocket of the cloak by her uncle. He compared the two handwritings together, and if the neat and regular letters of the Countess had already pleased him extremely, he found in the similar but yet bolder character of the unknown, a flow of inexpressible harmony. The note contained nothing, and yet the letters seemed to affect him as strongly as the presence of his beautiful friend had formerly done.

He fell into a dreamy state of longing, and just at that moment Mignon and the harper commenced to sing an irregular duet, which was completely in accordance with his feelings.

He only who has loved,
  Knows grief like mine,
From hope and joy removed,
  Alone, I pine!
Around with longing eyes
  I look all day,
While he, whose heart I prize,
  Is far away!
From every joy removed,
  I faint—I pine—
He only who has loved
  Knows grief like mine.

CHAPTER XII.

THE soft allurements of his sweet guardian angel, in place of leading our friend along any certain path, only increased the restlessness which he had before experienced. A secret fire glowed within his veins, determined and undetermined objects appeared alternately before his mind, and awoke endless longings within his inmost soul. At one moment he wished that he possessed a horse, and at another that he were furnished with wings, and when at length he felt it wholly impossible that he could remain, he began to inquire for the first time to what place he should betake himself.

The thread of his destiny had become so mysteriously entangled, that he wished to see its strange knots untied or cut asunder. Frequently upon hearing the footsteps of a horse, or the wheels of a carriage, he would hasten to the window, hoping that some visitor had arrived, who might by chance bring him happy news, to make him joyful and contented. He would amuse himself with fancying that perhaps his friend Werner might visit the neighbourhood, or that even Mariana might appear. He was agitated by the sound of every post-horn. It might perchance bring intelligence of Melina's adventures, or it might be the huntsman returning to invite him to an interview with his beautiful adored.

But all these fancies ended in nothing, and he was soon compelled to content himself once more with solitude. As he now pondered over the past, there was one circumstance, which the more he viewed and considered it, the more it troubled and oppressed him, and that was his display of unsuccessful generalship, a circumstance upon which he could not think without vexation. For notwithstanding that he had defended himself skilfully when he had been accused by the company on the evening of that unfortunate day, he could not deny his guilt; and in some moments of melancholy, he rather attributed to himself the entire misfortune which had happened.

Self-love pourtrays our virtues and our vices in exaggerated forms. Wilhelm thought he had inspired the company with confidence in himself, and that he had directed their actions,

till under the influence of rashness and inexperience, a panic had seized them, against which they were unable to contend. Loud and silent reproaches had then pursued him, and when he had promised the misguided company that he would never abandon them till their losses had been amply repaid, he had to regret another folly in taking upon himself the sole responsibility of a calamity which was general. At one time he blamed himself for making this promise under the excitement of the moment, and then he felt that his extended hand, which no one had deigned to accept, was but an empty ceremony compared with the vow which his heart had sworn. He formed plans for rendering himself kind and useful to them, and everything suggested that he should pay an immediate visit to Serlo. He forthwith packed up his things, and without waiting for his perfect recovery, and regardless of the advice of the clergyman and the surgeon, accompanied by Mignon and the old harper, he determined to fly from a life of inactivity, in which his destiny had again too long confined him.

CHAPTER XIII.

Serlo received him with open arms, exclaiming, "Do I behold you and recognize you once again? You are but little altered. Is your love for our noble art as strong and lively as ever? I am rejoiced at your arrival, because I can now no longer feel the mistrust with which your last letter inspired me."

Wilhelm, much surprised, asked for a clearer explanation.

"You have acted towards me," said Serlo, "like an old friend. You have treated me like a great lord, to whom one may venture to recommend useless people, with a safe conscience. Our fate depends upon the judgment of the public, and I am afraid Melina and his company can scarcely be admitted amongst us."

Wilhelm was about to say something in their favour, but Serlo commenced to give so merciless a description of them, that our friend was pleased when the entrance of a young

lady interrupted the conversation, and she was introduced to him by his friend, as his sister Aurelia. She received him in the kindest manner, and her conversation was so agreeable that he did not once perceive a certain shade of sorrow which imparted a peculiar interest to her expressive countenance.

For the first time, since a long period, Wilhelm found himself once more in his proper element. Of late his conversation had been listened to by those who were attentive by compulsion, but now he had the happiness of speaking with critics and artists, who not only fully comprehended him, but whose conversation was instructive in return. With eager rapidity they spoke of all the latest pieces and pronounced judgment upon them with decision. They knew how to try and estimate the judgment of the public, and they speedily explained their mutual opinions.

In deference to Wilhelm's love for Shakspeare, their conversation soon turned upon that author. He assured Serlo that he looked forward with the fondest hopes to the epoch which would arise in Germany from his incomparable productions, and he soon introduced the character of Hamlet, with which he had been much occupied of late.

Serlo declared that if it had been possible, he would long since have performed that celebrated piece, and that he himself would willingly have played the character of Polonius. And then he added with a smile—we should have been able to find an Ophelia, had we only been provided with a Prince.

Wilhelm did not observe that Aurelia seemed a little displeased at her brother's raillery. In accordance with his usual habit, he was becoming talkative and instructive, and he wished to explain how he would have Hamlet performed. He stated in detail the result of his reflections upon the subject, and was at much pains to render his opinions acceptable, notwithstanding Serlo's doubts as to the correctness of his views. "But," exclaimed the latter at length, "supposing we admit all that you have said, what further explanation have you to add?"

"I have much to add," replied Wilhelm. "Picture to yourself a prince, such as I have described him, whose father has died suddenly. Ambition and the love of rule are not the passions which inspire him. He would have been

satisfied with knowing that he was the offspring of a king. But now he is compelled for the first time to notice the difference between a monarch and a subject. His right to the throne was not hereditary, yet his father's longer life would have strengthened the claims of his only son, and secured his hopes of the crown. But he now sees himself excluded by his uncle perhaps for ever, in spite of all his specious promises. Destitute of all things and of favour, he is a stranger in the very place which from his youth he had considered as his own possession. At this point his disposition takes the first tinge of melancholy. He feels that now he is not more, but rather less, than a private nobleman. He becomes the servant of every one, and yet he is not courteous nor condescending, but degraded and needy.

"His past condition appears to him like a vanished dream. In vain does his uncle seek to console him, and to display his prospects in another light. The consciousness of his nothingness will not abandon him.

"The second blow that struck him, inflicted a deeper wound and bowed him to the earth. It was the marriage of his mother. After the death of his father, the true and tender son had yet a mother left, and he hoped that in the company of this noble parent, he might honour the heroic form of his deceased father, but he lost her also, and that by a more cruel fate than if he had been deprived of her by death. The hopeful picture which an affectionate child loves to form of his parents has for ever vanished. The dead can afford him no assistance and in the living he finds no constancy. She too is a woman and owns the frailty which belongs to all her sex.

"He feels for the first time that he is forsaken, that he is an orphan, and that no worldly happiness can restore to him what he has lost. Naturally, neither sorrowful nor reflective, sorrow and reflection now become to him a grievous burden. Thus it is that he appears before us. I do not think I have introduced into the character any thing that does not belong to it, or that I have exaggerated it in any respect."

Serlo looked at his sister and observed: "Have I given you a false account of our friend? He has begun well, and he will continue to inform and to persuade us."

Wilhelm declared loudly that he did not wish to per-

suade, but to convince; and he asked for another moment's patience.

"Think of this youth," he exclaimed, "think of this prince vividly—reflect upon his condition and then observe him, when he learns that his father's spirit has appeared. Accompany him during that fearful night when the venerable ghost addresses him. A shuddering horror seizes him—he speaks to the mysterious form—it beckons to him, he follows and listens. The dreadful accusation of his uncle echoes in his ears, the injunction to revenge, and the imploring supplication again and again repeated, 'remember me!'

"And when the ghost has vanished, whom do we see standing before us? a young hero panting for revenge? a prince by birth who feels proud that he is enjoined to punish the usurper of his crown? No, astonishment and perplexity confound the solitary youth—he vents the bitterness of his soul against smiling villains—swears never to forget his father's departed spirit, and concludes with the expression of deep regret that

> 'The time is out of joint—O cursed spite,
> That ever I was born to set it right!'

"It seems to me that in these words will be found the key to Hamlet's whole course of conduct, and it is evident that Shakspeare meant to describe a great duty imposed upon a soul unable to perform it. And in this sense I find that the whole play is conceived and worked out. An oak-tree is planted in a costly vase, which should only have borne beautiful flowers in its bosom,—the roots expand and the vase is shattered.

"A lovely, pure, noble and highly moral being, without the strength of mind which forms a hero, sinks beneath a load which it cannot bear and must not renounce. He views every duty as holy, but this one is too much for him. He is called upon to do what is impossible, not impossible in itself, but impossible to him. And as he turns and winds and torments himself, still advancing and retreating, ever reminded and remembering his purpose, he almost loses sight of it completely, without ever recovering his happiness."

CHAPTER XIV.

Several people now entered who interrupted the conversation. They were amateurs who were accustomed to attend a small concert once a week at Serlo's house. He was partial to music and frequently asserted that an actor without a love of music could not possibly have a clear conception or proper feeling for his art. "As a man acts," he would say, "with more ease and dignity, when his motions are accompanied and influenced by music, so should he arrange his prose parts in his own mind, that he may not slur them over monotonously in a manner of his own, but may deliver them with proper alternation of time and measure."

Aurelia appeared to take but little interest in what was going on, but at length she led Wilhelm into another apartment, and when she had taken him to the window and looked out upon the starry heaven, she exclaimed, "You owe us the conclusion of Hamlet. I do not wish to press you, for I am anxious that my brother should hear you as well as myself, but pray let me hear your thoughts about Ophelia."

"There is not much to be said about her," replied Wilhelm, "for her character is drawn by a few master-strokes. Her whole existence flows in sweet and ripe sensation. Her attachment to the Prince, to whose hand she may aspire, flows so spontaneously, her affectionate heart yields so completely to its impulse, that both her father and brother are afraid, and both give her plain and direct warning of her danger. Decorum, like the thin crape upon her bosom, cannot conceal the motions of her heart, but on the contrary it betrays them. Her imagination is engaged, her silent modesty breathes a sweet desire, and if the convenient goddess Opportunity should shake the tree, the fruit would quickly fall."

"And then," said Aurelia, "when she sees herself forsaken, rejected and despised, when everything is overturned in the soul of her distracted lover, and he offers her the bitter goblet of sorrow in place of the sweet cup of affection—"

"Her heart breaks,"—cried Wilhelm, "the entire edifice of her being is loosened from its hold, the death of her father

knocks fearfully against it and the whole structure is overturned."

Wilhelm had not perceived with what an expression Aurelia pronounced these last words. His mind was wholly absorbed in the work of art, whose connexion and completeness filled his thoughts, he never suspected that his fair friend felt quite another influence, and that his dramatic sketches had awakened a deep sorrow within her bosom.

Aurelia's head was still resting upon her arm, and her eyes filled with tears were directed to the heavens. At length she could restrain her grief no longer, she seized our friend by both his hands, and exclaimed as he stood astonished before her, "Forgive, forgive an anguished heart! This company confines and restrains me. I must endeavour to conceal myself from my unfeeling brother, your presence has burst my bonds. My friend," she continued, "our acquaintance has but this moment commenced, and already you are my confidant." She had scarcely pronounced these words, when she sank upon his shoulder. "Do not judge harshly of me," she continued with a sobbing voice, "because I explain myself so quickly and you have been a witness of my weakness. Be my friend, continue so—I shall deserve it from you." He consoled her in the kindest manner, but in vain, her tears flowed and choked her utterance.

Serlo entered at this moment and was most unwelcome. He was accompanied unexpectedly by Philina, whom he held by the hand. "Behold your friend," he said, "he will welcome you gladly."

"What!" exclaimed Wilhelm with astonishment, "do I see you here?" She approached him with a modest and composed look, bade him welcome and praised Serlo's kindness, who in the hope that she would improve, although she possessed no merits of her own, had received her into his accomplished company of actors. She was friendly towards Wilhelm, but conducted herself with dignified reserve.

Her dissimulation however only continued so long as the others were present. Aurelia soon retired to conceal her sorrow, and Serlo in a short time was also summoned away, whereupon Philina looked closely towards the door, to make sure that they had both really departed, and then commenced dancing about the room like a wild thing, till at length she

threw herself upon the floor, and went almost into fits with laughter. She then rose and commenced coaxing Wilhelm, expressing the most unbounded joy that she had been wise enough to precede him to explore the country, and to establish herself in snug quarters.

"Things go on charmingly here," she cried, "just in the way I like—Aurelia has had an unfortunate love affair with a nobleman, who must be a splendid fellow and whom I must manage to see. If I am not much mistaken, he has left her a memorial. There is a little fellow here about three years old, as bright as the sun—the papa must be uncommonly handsome; I seldom care for children, but this little fellow quite enchants me. I have found her out. The death of her husband, the new acquaintance, the age of the child, every thing agrees.

"But her friend is gone now. He has not seen her for a year. She is in despair and inconsolable. The fool! Her brother has a dancing girl among his actors with whom he is on intimate terms, and an actress in addition, to whom he is engaged, there are some ladies also in the town whom he visits, and now I am on his list. The fool! You shall hear of the others to-morrow. And now one little word about Philina, whom you know. The arch-simpleton is in love with you." She swore it was true and called it a rare joke, and pressed Wilhelm earnestly to fall in love with Aurelia, as then the chase would be rich in the extreme. "She will pursue her inconstant swain, you her, I you, and her brother me. If that does not afford sport for six months I will consent to die at the first episode in this four-fold complicated tale." She implored him not to ruin her prospects, and to pay her as much respect as her conduct in public should deserve.

CHAPTER XV.

On the following morning Wilhelm visited Madame Melina, but she was not at home, and upon making inquiries

for the other members of the wandering company, he learned that Philina had invited them to a breakfast. He joined the party from motives of curiosity, and found them all happy and in good spirits. The cunning girl had assembled them together and was feasting them with chocolate. She informed them at the same time, that there were good hopes in store for them, as she expected, by means of her influence, to persuade the manager that it would be greatly to his advantage to have such clever performers in his company. They listened to her with attention, drank one cup of chocolate after another, decided that the girl was not so bad a creature after all, and determined to speak well of her in future.

"Do you suppose then," said Wilhelm who remained behind with Philina, "that Serlo will engage all our companions?" "By no means," replied Philina, "nor does that thought trouble me in the least, the sooner they go the better. I only wish for Laertes—the rest we can easily dispense with."

She endeavoured then to persuade Wilhelm no longer to bury his talents in obscurity, but to appear upon the stage under the direction of Serlo. She praised the order, the taste and the spirit which were there displayed, and spoke so flatteringly to our friend of his abilities, that his heart and imagination were captivated by her proposal, although his reason and understanding condemned it. But he hid his wishes from himself, and from Philina, and passed a restless day. He could not even resolve to visit his business correspondents and to receive the letters which might be waiting for him. And though he could easily conjecture the anxiety of his friends about him all this time, he avoided seeking for precise information respecting them, especially as he expected a great enjoyment in the evening from the performance of a new piece.

Serlo had declined to admit him to the rehearsals. "You must become acquainted with us on the best side," he observed, "before we allow you to look over our cards."

On the following evening, however, Wilhelm attended the performance with the greatest delight. It was the first time that he had seen a theatre in such perfection. It was generally allowed that the actors possessed considerable

talents, many happy qualities and a clear and exalted idea of their art, but they were not equal, though they mutually maintained, supported and encouraged each other, and in the entire of their acting they were steady and correct. It was soon evident that Serlo was the soul of the whole, and he generally appeared to much advantage. A cheerful disposition, a moderate vivacity, a correct feeling of propriety, accompanied by considerable imitative powers, were evident as soon as he entered upon the stage and commenced to speak. His internal satisfaction with himself seemed to extend itself to all his hearers, and the talented manner with which he so easily and pleasantly expressed the most delicate shadowings of the characters he played, awakened the greater delight, as he knew how to conceal the art, in which through long practice, he excelled.

His sister Aurelia was by no means his inferior, and indeed she received a larger share of approbation than Serlo himself, for she succeeded in moving the hearts of the spectators, while it was his aim merely to gratify and amuse.

After spending a few pleasant days, Aurelia inquired for Wilhelm. He hastened to her, and found her reclining upon a sofa. She seemed to be suffering from headache, and her whole appearance manifested a tendency to fever. Her eyes sparkled at the sight of Wilhelm. "Pardon me," she exclaimed, "the confidence with which you have inspired me, has made me weak. Till now I could bear my sorrows in silence, and could even find strength and comfort in them, but now, I know not how it has occurred, you have caused me to confide in you, and you must, however reluctantly, take part in the battle which I am fighting against myself."

Wilhelm replied in a friendly and obliging tone. He assured her that he was perpetually haunted by her image and her woes, he implored her confidence and promised to devote himself to her friendship.

His eyes, whilst he spoke, were attracted by a child that was seated on the ground before him, engaged in playing with all sorts of toys. He might be, as Philina had already said, about three years old, and Wilhelm now understood why the thoughtless girl, whose expressions were so seldom elevated, had likened him to the sun. His clear eyes and

open countenance were shaded by the most beautiful golden locks, and his dark delicate and softly bending eyebrows adorned a forehead of glittering whiteness, while the ruddy hues of health glowed upon his cheeks. "Sit down beside me," said Aurelia. "You contemplate the happy child with astonishment, with joy. I take him in my arms and watch him with care, he alone is the measure of my sufferings, for they seldom allow me to estimate the value of such a gift."

"Allow me," she continued, "to converse with you about myself and my fate. For I am above all things anxious that you should not misunderstand me. I hoped to enjoy a few calm moments and therefore I have invited you hither, but now that you are come, I have lost the thread of my discourse. 'Another forsaken creature in the world!' I think I hear you say. You are a man and doubtless you think in this wise. 'How she distresses herself about a necessary evil—the infidelity of men,—which awaits a woman as certainly as death. The fool!' But, my friend, if mine were a common fate, I would bear my calamity without a murmur. But it is so singular, why cannot I shew it to you in a mirror, why cannot I commission another to explain it! Had I been seduced, surprised and then forsaken, I should find consolation in despair, but my calamity is more grievous still—I have deceived myself, unknowingly I have proved my own betrayer and that is what I never can forgive."

"With feelings so noble as yours," observed Wilhelm, "you can never be wholly unhappy."

"And are you aware to what I am indebted for my feelings?" inquired Aurelia. "To the most vicious education that could contaminate an innocent maiden—to the worst example that could be given for the seduction of the senses and inclinations.

"After the early death of my mother, the best years of my youth were spent with an aunt, who made it a rule to despise the laws of decency. Blindly she abandoned herself to every inclination, careless whether she commanded or obeyed its object, provided she could forget herself in the wildest enjoyments.

"Conceive what ideas of men, we children must have

formed, with our pure, clear notions of innocence! How rude, bold and unmannerly was every one whom she attracted to her! How sated, insolent and disgusted were they when dismissed! for years I have beheld this woman a slave to the most degraded of men. What sufferings has she not endured! and with how much boldness has she not reconciled herself to her fate and worn her fetters!

"Thus did I become acquainted with your sex, my friend, and my hatred for it was intense, when I found that even good men in their conduct towards us, abandoned every noble feeling which they might inherit from nature.

"Unfortunately also I was enabled, in such circumstances, to discover many painful things in relation to my own sex; and in truth I was wiser as a girl of sixteen years, than I am now, when I can scarcely understand myself. Why are we so wise in youth—so wise, and why are we ever growing less so."

The child began to cry. Aurelia grew impatient and rang the bell. An old woman came to carry him away. "Do you still suffer from the tooth-ache?" inquired Aurelia of the nurse, whose face was enveloped in a handkerchief. "Almost beyond endurance," answered the other in a faint voice, as she took up the child. He liked going with her and she carried him away.

Scarcely had the child disappeared, when Aurelia began to cry bitterly. "I can do nothing but complain and lament," she exclaimed, "and I am ashamed of my contemptible conduct. My memory is gone and I cannot continue my narrative." She sobbed and said no more. Wilhelm unwilling to make a mere general observation, and unable to say any thing appropriate, pressed her hand and looked at her in silence. At length in his embarrassment, he took up a book which lay open upon the table. It was a volume of Shakspeare and open at the play of Hamlet.

Serlo who now appeared at the door, after inquiring for his sister, peeped into the book which our friend had in his hand, and then exclaimed. "What! still busy with Hamlet! But you are right, though many doubts have occurred to me, which are calculated to injure the canonical view with which you would have the play regarded. Do not the English themselves admit that its chief interest closes with the third act, and that the two concluding acts only encumber

the others—and indeed it is true that the play becomes heavy towards the end."

"It is very possible," answered Wilhelm, "that some individuals of a nation which boasts of so many masterpieces, may be misled by prejudice or ignorance, but that should not prevent us from using our own eyes and forming a sound judgment. I am far from condemning the plan of this play—indeed in my opinion a grander one has never been invented—nay, it is not invented, it is very nature."

"How can you explain that?" inquired Serlo.

"I will explain nothing," answered Wilhelm, "I will only state my own impressions."

Aurelia rose from her cushion, leaned upon her hand and gazed intently on Wilhelm, who, in the full conviction that his opinions were well founded, proceeded as follows. "It pleases and flatters us to see a hero relying upon his own resources, loving and hating as his heart impels him, undertaking and completing, overcoming every obstacle and finally attaining his desired end. Historians and poets would fain persuade us that this may be the proud lot of man. But here we are taught another lesson. The hero is without a plan, but the piece is not so. We do not here behold a villain punished in pursuance of a strict and deliberate design—no, a dreadful crime has been perpetrated, and it carries every thing with it, even the guiltless is borne along in its course. The criminal would avoid the gulf which yawns before him, yet he plunges headlong in, at the very moment when he thinks he has found a happy way to escape. For it is the property of crime to spread mischief over innocence, as it is of virtue to extend blessings to the undeserving, whilst the author of the evil or of the good remains unpunished or unrewarded. How wonderful is this play of ours! From the flames of another world comes forth a spirit and demands revenge—in vain. Every thing conspires to invoke revenge, in vain. Neither earthly nor unearthly influences can execute what is reserved for fate alone. The hour of judgment comes. The wicked falls together with the good. A whole race is mowed down, that another may appear."

After a pause, during which they looked at one another in silence, Serlo said, "In exalting the poet you render

no compliment to Providence, and it seems to me that in order to honour your favourite Bard, you would impute to him an object and a design of which he himself has never dreamed."

CHAPTER XVI.

"PERMIT me to ask you a question," said Aurelia. "I have again examined Ophelia's part and I am pleased with it, and feel sure that upon certain conditions I should be able act it. But tell me, is it not your opinion that the poet ought to have written songs of a different kind for the insane maiden? And might we not for this purpose even select a few fragments from some of our own melancholy ballads? Expressions of double meaning and indelicate allusions do not become the pure lips of a noble-minded girl."

"My good friend," said Wilhelm, "even upon this point, I cannot coincide with you. A deep meaning is concealed in these peculiarities and in this seeming impropriety. Have we not an intimation from the very beginning of the play of the subject with which the thoughts of the maiden are engaged? She pursues her course in silent secresy, but without being able wholly to conceal her wishes and her longing. The voice of desire has echoed within her soul, and she has often tried like an unskilful nurse to lull her senses to repose with ballads, which have only kept her more awake. But at length when all self-control is at an end, and the secrets of her heart appear upon her tongue, that tongue betrays her, and in the innocence of her madness, even in the presence of royalty she takes delight in the echo of her loose but dearly-loved songs of 'The maiden whose heart was won,' 'The maid who stole to meet the youth,' and so forth."

He had scarcely finished speaking, when Wilhelm suddenly witnessed an extraordinary scene, the meaning of which he was wholly unable to comprehend.

Serlo had paced several times up and down the apartment without betraying any apparent design. Suddenly he approached Aurelia's dressing table, and seizing hold of some-

thing that was lying upon it, he ran towards the door with his prize. Aurelia observing this action of her brother, sprang up and threw herself in his way; she caught hold of him firmly and was quick enough to seize one end of the article which he had in his hand. They struggled and contended together with great obstinacy, wrestled and turned each other round, whilst he laughed and she exerted herself to the utmost of her strength. At length Wilhelm hastened forward to separate and to appease them. He was, however, astonished to see Aurelia turn aside, holding a naked dagger in her hand, whilst Serlo flung the scabbard, which he had retained, angrily upon the ground. Wilhelm started back with surprise, and his silent astonishment appeared to ask why so angry a contest had taken place about so strange an instrument?

"You shall judge between us!" cried Serlo. "What does she want with a dagger? Let me show it to you: it is not fit for an actress. The point is like a needle and the edge is as keen as a razor. What is it for? passionate as she is, she may perhaps do herself some injury. I have a settled aversion for such singularities, and though any serious thoughts of danger may be foolish, yet so dangerous a plaything ought to be laid aside."

"I have it once more," cried Aurelia, as she held up the naked blade, "and in future I will take better care of my trusty friend. Pardon me," she exclaimed, as she kissed the dagger, "for having so much neglected you."

It seemed that Serlo was now becoming really angry. "Just as you please, brother," she continued, "but how can you tell whether some precious talisman may not be concealed beneath this appearance? or whether it may not be to me a source of help and counsel, in times of danger? Must everything be evil that looks perilous?"

"Such senseless speeches as these are enough to make me furious," answered Serlo, and with ill-concealed anger he left the apartment. Aurelia replaced the dagger carefully in a sheath. "We may now resume the discourse which my brother has interrupted," she calmly observed, as Wilhelm was preparing to inquire into the cause of the strange quarrel.

"I must acknowledge that your view of Ophelia's character

is correct," she continued, "you clearly comprehend the object of the poet, but I think she is rather an object of pity than of sympathy. Allow me however to make one observation, which has lately occurred to me frequently with respect to yourself. I have observed with admiration, the penetrating and correct glance with which you view poetry, especially poetry of a dramatic nature. The deep stores of invention are not hidden from you, and you can detect all the finest strokes of representation. Without having become acquainted with the objects themselves in nature, you perceive the truth of the picture, a foretaste of the whole world seems to lie concealed within you, which the harmonious touches of poetry awaken and unfold. For in truth," she continued, "you do not appear to have acquired much from outward influences. I have seldom met with a person who has so little understood, or rather, who has so wholly misunderstood, the beings amongst whom he has lived. Permit me to say it. When we hear you expounding Shakspeare you appear to have come amongst us from the council chamber of the gods, where you have attended their deliberations about the formation of mankind. But when we see your conduct with your fellow-creatures, I could suppose you to be the very earliest child of creation gazing with strange astonishment and edifying good humour upon the lions and the asses, the sheep and the elephants around you, and addressing them confidingly as your equals, merely because they were present and were moving like yourself."

"The consciousness of my puerile innocence in this respect," he replied, "often afflicts me, and I would thank you to give me a clearer insight into the conduct of the world. I have been accustomed from my youth to direct the eyes of my soul rather to interior than to exterior objects, and it seems therefore but natural that I should, up to a certain point, have become acquainted with men, without however knowing much about mankind at large."

"Really," said Aurelia, "I had an idea that you meant it as a good joke, when you spoke so favourably of those people whom you sent to my brother, and when I compared their real acquirements with your account of their merits, I own I was much surprised."

Although Aurelia's observations were perfectly true, and

Wilhelm was conscious of the defects to which she had alluded, he felt nevertheless that they were painful and offensive; he therefore remained silent and reserved, partly that he might not betray his irritation, and partly that he might examine his own bosom respecting the justice of the rebuke.

"You must not be displeased at what I have said," added Aurelia, "the light of the understanding is easily attained, but no one can enrich us with the fulness of the heart. If you are destined to become an artist, you cannot too long preserve the innocence of which I have spoken; it is the beautiful hull which encloses the young bud—woe to us if we burst it too soon! Happy are we not to know too well those for whom it is our lot to labour!

"In truth, I was also in this happy state, when I first trod the boards, and I entertained the most exalted ideas of myself and of my country. What a noble people did I not esteem the Germans, and what did I not think them competent to achieve! Such were the people whom I was accustomed to address, raised above them by the elevation of a small stage, and separated from them only by a row of lamps, the glare and vapour of which prevented me from clearly discerning the objects before me. And how welcome to me was the voice of approbation which issued from the crowd! how gratefully did I accept the applause which was presented to me unanimously by so many hands. For a long time I was delighted with these ideas—I possessed the power of moving the feelings of crowds, and they affected me in return—I was on the best terms with my audience—I imagined that a perfect harmony existed between us, and that I always had before me an assembly of the worthiest and the noblest beings in the land.

"Unfortunately, however, it was not the actress alone whose natural and artistic excellence so much interested these patrons of the theatre, they were attracted also by the charms of the young and lively maiden. They made me clearly understand that it was my duty, to share with them personally, those emotions which I had awakened within them. And this was no part of my business. I wished to elevate their minds, but to that thing which they called the heart, I could not lay the slightest claim. From that time, I was addressed by men of all ranks, ages and characters, and

nothing troubled me more than my inability to shut myself up in my room, like other honest maidens, and save myself in this manner from a world of trouble.

"The men, for the most part, resembled those whom I had been accustomed to meet at my aunt's, and they must have excited my disgust if I had not been amused with their peculiarities and follies. As I could not avoid seeing them either upon the stage, or in public places, or at home, I determined to study their characters, and in this amusement I was zealously assisted by my brother. And when you remember that from the active shopkeeper, and the conceited merchant's son, down to the experienced cautious man of the world, the gallant soldier, and the daring prince, all in turn passed in review before me, and each thought that he could in his own way succeed in accomplishing his romantic speculation—you will pardon me for believing that I possessed some experience of my nation.

"The fantastically apparelled student, the humble-proud embarrassed man of letters, the sleek contented canon, the stiff attentive man of office, the rough country baron, the smooth and polite courtier, the young and erring clergyman, the cool, but quick and actively calculating merchant—all these I have seen in turn before me, and in truth there were few of them who inspired me with the smallest degree of interest, on the contrary, it was with pain that I received the praises of fools, and I found it both distressing and annoying to gather those applauses in detail, which in their collected form, had given me so much pleasure.

"When I expected to hear a sensible compliment upon my acting, when I hoped that they would praise an author whom I highly valued, they made some foolish observation and spoke of some wretched piece in which they wished to see me perform. When I listened to hear amongst them some noble, brilliant, witty thought, I was invariably disappointed. A fault, a mispronunciation or some provincialism, these were the important subjects upon which they fastened, and which they never permitted to escape. At length I was at a loss what course to take—they deemed themselves far too clever to be entertained, and they conceived that their romping and noise afforded me wonderful amusement. I began to despise them from my inmost heart, and it seemed to me as if the

whole nation had sought to debase itself in my eyes by means of these, its deputies. They were so rude, so ill-bred, so badly educated, so wholly destitute of pleasing manners, so devoid of taste. Often did I exclaim, 'No German can even fasten the buckle of his shoe, till he has been instructed in the art by some foreign nation.'

"You see how blinded and how sadly unjust I was, and the longer this continued the more my prejudices increased. All this might have proved my ruin—but I fell into another extreme. I married, or rather I allowed myself to be married. My brother, who had undertaken the management of a theatre, felt anxious for an assistant. His choice fell upon a young man who was not displeasing to me, but who was deficient in every quality that my brother possessed: genius, animation, spirit and daring—but in return he had every thing that my brother wanted, love of order, industry, and those precious gifts of housekeeping and the proper management of money.

"He became my husband, I know not how—and we lived together, I know not why. But enough! our affairs prospered, our receipts were large, the result of my brother's activity, and we practised economy—a merit which belonged to my husband. I thought no longer of the world or of the nation. I had nothing to share with the world, and of the nation I had lost every distinct idea. When I appeared upon the stage, I did it to obtain my livelihood, and I opened my lips, because I dared not maintain silence since I had come out to speak

"But I must not represent matters too unfavourably. I had entered fully into the views of my brother—and these were to earn applause and money—for between ourselves, he loves praise and spends freely. But my acting was no longer dictated by my own feelings or conviction, but by his wishes, and I was contented when I earned his approbation.

"He was guided wholly by public caprice. The money flowed in, he could live as he wished, and with him we enjoyed prosperous times.

"But I had fallen into a mere handicraft routine of life. I passed my days without joy or sympathy. My marriage was childless and of short duration. My husband fell into ill health, his strength decayed visibly, and my care for him

interrupted my general indifference. About this time I formed an acquaintance which was to me the beginning of a new existence, a new and more rapid life, for it will soon come to an end."

She remained silent for a time, and then continued,— "Suddenly my talkative humour falters, and I scarcely have courage to continue. Allow me to rest a little. You must not go until you have been made acquainted with all my misfortunes in detail; but in the mean time call in Mignon, and hear what she has to say."

During Aurelia's narrative the child had entered the apartment more than once, but as they had spoken in a lower tone during her stay, she had retired quietly and was now sitting in the antechamber. When she was invited to return, she brought a book back with her, which, from its shape and binding, was at once perceived to be an atlas. During her stay at the house of the Clergyman, she had seen some maps for the first time; they had excited her astonishment, and had caused her to make many inquiries respecting them, from which she had obtained a fund of information. Her anxiety to receive instruction was increased by her acquaintance with this branch of knowledge. She earnestly besought Wilhelm to purchase the book for her, informing him that she had left her large silver buckle as security with the printseller for it, and that she was anxious to receive it to-morrow morning, as this evening it was too late for the purpose. He consented, and she now commenced to repeat something she had already learned, and according to her usual custom, proceeded to ask the strangest questions. It was easy to perceive that, notwithstanding her great wish to learn, her progress was slow and laborious. It was the same with her writing, a task at which she toiled exceedingly. She spoke very broken German, and it was only when she sang and touched her guitar, that she appeared to possess an organ which opened and displayed the emotions of her soul.

As she is now our topic, we may allude to the embarrassment which Wilhelm had lately experienced on her account. When she met him or bade him farewell, in the morning or at night, she was accustomed to embrace him so affectionately, and to kiss him with so much ardour, that the force of her ripening nature often rendered him anxious and fearful. The

warmth of her disposition seemed to increase daily, and her whole being seemed agitated with a silent restlessness. She appeared unable to exist without twisting a piece of thread between her fingers, or tieing a handkerchief in knots, or biting a paper, or a piece of wood. All her occupations seemed designed to appease her inward violent agitation. The only thing that made her cheerful, was the presence of little Felix, and with him she could enjoy herself very happily.

After a little rest, Aurelia wishing to explain to her friend a matter which lay near her heart, became impatient at the child's delay, and gave her to understand, therefore, that she must go. At length when there was no alternative, they were obliged to dismiss her peremptorily and against her will. "Now or never," said Aurelia, "I must relate the sequel of my story. If my affectionate, well-beloved, unjust friend were only a few miles distant, I should ask you to mount your horse and endeavour to make his acquaintance by some means or other, and I know that upon your return, you would pardon and pity me from your heart. As it is, I can only describe in words how amiable he was and how I loved him.

"I became acquainted with him at that critical time when I was a prey to sorrow from the illness of my husband. He had just returned from America, where, in company with some French officers, he had served with distinction under the flag of the United States.

"He received me with an air of unembarrassed dignity and open kindness; he spoke of myself, of my condition, and of my acting, with so much sympathy and candour, that for the first time, I felt delighted at seeing my existence clearly reflected in the being of another. His judgments were correct without being harsh, precise but not unkind. He evinced no severity of manner, and his pleasantries were inoffensive. He seemed accustomed to be successful with the sex; this won my attention, and he was far from being flattering or importunate, which rendered me incautious.

"In this town he had but few acquaintances, he was generally on horseback visiting his numerous friends in the neighbourhood or attending to the business of his firm. Upon his return, he usually alighted at my house, evinced much anxiety for my invalid husband, and alleviated his sufferings

by recommending us a good physician, and as he interested himself in all that concerned me, he allowed me in return to feel an interest in his welfare. He related to me the history of his campaigns, his unconquerable attachment to a soldier's life, all his family circumstances, and his present occupation. He kept no secret from me, he unfolded his inmost thoughts, he allowed me to penetrate into the secret recesses of his soul. I became acquainted with his capabilities and his passions. For the first time in my life I enjoyed a cordial intellectual attachment. I was attracted and borne along by him before I was able to reflect upon my condition.

"It was at this very time that I lost my husband. The whole burden of the theatrical business now devolved upon me. My brother, without a rival upon the stage, was wholly useless in matters of domestic economy. I therefore undertook every thing, and studied more diligently than ever. I played once more as I had been accustomed to do, with new life and fresh energy, all for him and on his account; but I did not always succeed when I knew that my noble friend was present. He witnessed my performance several times, and you may judge how delighted I felt at his unexpected applause.

"In truth I am a strange being. In every character that I played, it seemed to me as if I were praising him or speaking of his honour; for such was the disposition of my heart, and the words I uttered might carry whatever meaning they pleased. When I knew that he was amongst the audience, I did not dare to act with all my power: and in the same manner I did not press my love or praise upon him openly, but when he was absent, I had free liberty, and I then exerted myself with a safe conscience and indescribable satisfaction. Applause delighted me once more, and when I gratified the public I longed to exclaim that 'they were indebted for it all to him.'

"The relation in which I stood towards the public and the nation, had undergone a miraculous change. Again they appeared to me in the most advantageous light, and I felt perfectly astonished at my previous blindness.

"'How unreasonable,' I would exclaim to myself, 'was it to censure a nation, only because it is a nation! Is it possible,' I inquired, 'for individual men to possess for us an equal interest? by no means. The only question is, whether amongst the large mass of mankind, there is a distribution

of talents, powers, and capabilities, which, under favourable circumstances, are capable of being developed and directed by one common object.' I now felt charmed that there was so small a share of originality amongst my countrymen; I felt delighted that they did not require guidance, and that they had found a leader.

"Lothario, for you must allow me to call my friend by his dear Christian name, had constantly extolled the courageous qualities of the Germans, and maintained that no braver nation existed in the world when they were properly led, and I felt ashamed at never having thought of this primary virtue of the people. He was well read in history, and was intimate with many of the most meritorious men of his age. Although he was young, his eye could mark the hopeful budding youth of his fatherland, and appreciate the silent labours of busy and active men in their various employments. Through him I caught a view of Germany; I could see what it was and all that it would become, and I felt ashamed at having formed my opinion of a nation from the motley crowd, with which I had become acquainted behind the scenes of a theatre. He made me sensible of the duty of becoming true, intelligent, and enlivening, within the limits of my own sphere. Henceforth, when I trod the stage, I considered myself inspired. The most common-place passages possessed a sterling value as I spoke them, and if I had then had the assistance of a poet, I could have produced the most wonderful effects.

"The young widow lived in this manner for many months. He could not exist without me, and I was wretched when he was absent. He shewed me the correspondence of his relatives and of his excellent sister; he took an interest in my most trifling affairs, and no union could have been more intimate or more complete than ours. The name of love was never mentioned. He went and came—he came and went—and now my friend it is high time that you also should go."

CHAPTER XVII.

Wilhelm was unable any longer to postpone his visit to his commercial friends; but it was not without anxiety that he executed his intention, as he knew that he should then receive

letters from his relatives. He feared the censure which he foresaw they must contain, and he deemed it probable that his house of business might have received information of the uneasiness he had occasioned. And after his own career of knightly adventures, he dreaded the schoolboy aspect in which he must now appear; he determined therefore to put a bold face upon the matter and conceal his real embarrassment.

But to his great surprise and satisfaction, every thing went off admirably. In the large busy counting house, time had been scarcely found for opening his correspondence, and a very cursory allusion had been made to his protracted delay. The letters of his father and of his friend Werner were most satisfactory. The former was in hopes of receiving a complete journal, which at his departure he had recommended his son to keep, and for which he had himself furnished the plan, and he was not uneasy at the first period of his son's silence, though he felt much perplexed at the only letter which had reached him, and which had been written from the castle of the Count. Werner jested in his old fashion, related merry stories of the town, and requested an account of the new friends, with whom he expected that Wilhelm would become acquainted in the large trading cities which he visited. Wilhelm was highly pleased at escaping so easily, and wrote some very cheerful letters in reply, in which he promised his father a full detail of his travels, which should embody every species of geographical, statistical, and mercantile information. He stated that he had seen a great deal during his journey from which he hoped to compose a readable volume. But he failed to perceive that he was again in the same dilemma in which he had found himself once before, when he had lighted his lamps and collected his audience to witness a play that had not even been composed. And even when he really commenced his work, he found that though he could converse freely about thoughts and emotions, and impart much experience with relation to the heart and spirit, he was utterly ignorant of all outward objects, to which, as he now perceived, he had never paid the least attention.

In this difficulty, the knowledge of his friend Laertes came opportunely to his relief. Little as these young people resembled each other, custom had united them together,

and Laertes, in spite of all his faults and peculiarities, was an interesting personage. With his cheerful happy disposition he might have grown old, without even bestowing a thought upon his situation. But ill-health and misfortune had at length robbed him of the pure feelings of youth, and had opened his eyes to the fugitive, transitory nature of existence. Thence he had acquired a humourous, rhapsodical way of thinking, or rather of communicating his impressions. He disliked solitude, frequented hotels and coffee houses, and when he remained within doors, books of travels formed his favourite, or indeed, his only amusement. With these he could amply gratify his taste from the resources of a circulating library, and half the world was soon inscribed upon his faithful memory.

He found no difficulty, therefore, in assisting his friend, when the latter complained of his total want of materials to supply the narrative which he had so solemnly promised. "We will now frame a work of art," exclaimed Laertes, "which it will be difficult to excel.

"Has not Germany, from one end to the other, been repeatedly travelled over, crossed over, walked over, crept over, and flown over? And does not every German traveller invariably avail himself of the noble privilege of making the public defray his expenses, whether they be great or small? Only give me a sketch of your route before your arrival amongst us, and I can supply all the rest. I will provide you with every source of information and furnish you with all kinds of assistance. We shall speak of miles that were never measured, and of populations which were never counted. We shall take the revenues of states from pocket books and statistical tables, which, after all, are the most authentic documents. These shall form the basis of our political discussions, and we shall not fail to indulge in some passing observations upon the ruling powers. We may describe one or two princes as the fathers of their country, that our reflections upon the others may obtain more ready credence. If in the course of our journey, we fail to visit the residence of some celebrated persons, we shall be sure to meet them at the hotel, where, in their confidential communications to ourselves, they will utter the greatest absurdities. We must especially remember to weave a love adventure into our

narrative, and we shall produce a work with which every father and mother will feel delighted, and for which the very publisher will pay without grumbling."

They went to work forthwith, and both friends found much pleasure in their occupation; Wilhelm frequenting the theatre at night, and enjoying the company of Serlo and Aurelia by day. His ideas now began to expand more fully, as they had hitherto been confined within bounds of too limited a nature.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Wilhelm listened to Serlo's account of himself with the greatest interest. It was told to him in fragments, for it was not the custom of this peculiar being to be very confidential or to express himself at any time in a connected manner. It may be said that he was born and nursed upon the stage. Before he could speak he had enlisted the sympathy of the spectators, for authors very early understood his natural and innocent mode of exciting pity, and his first exclamation of "Father" or "Mother" won for him the greatest applause in favourite pieces, long before he could understand what was meant by the audience clapping their hands. Sometimes ornamented with wings he came fluttering upon the stage in the character of Cupid, at other times he would issue as a Harlequin from an egg, or in the character of a little sweep would play the drollest tricks.

Unfortunately during the intervals of his representations, he had to pay dearly for the applauses which he received. His father, believing that the attention of children was best excited and retained by chastisement, was accustomed to beat him severely at stated periods during his study of a part, not because the boy was dull, but in order that his cleverness by this means might be rendered more certain and confirmed. Upon the same principle formerly, whilst setting up landmarks, the children who looked on, invariably

received a sound beating, and the eldest of them ever afterwards retained a vivid recollection of the exact spot where it had been inflicted. As Serlo grew up, he displayed more than ordinary capabilities both of mind and body, combined with a great pliancy in his movements and gestures, which much improved his style of acting. His powers of imitation surpassed belief. Even when a child he could mimic other persons with such accuracy as to bring them before you, although in figure, in age, and in manner, they might not only be wholly unlike him, but unlike one another. Neither was he deficient in the power of making his own way in the world, and, for this reason, as soon as he became conscious of his strength, nothing could be more natural than that he should elope from his father, particularly as the latter considered that as his son's understanding increased and his talents developed, it was proper to bring them to perfection by the very harshest treatment.

Happy therefore did he now feel himself—a free boy in a free world, where his powers of drollery invariably secured for him a favourable reception. Good fortune first led him during the festivities of the Carnival to a convent, where, as the monk had just died who had been accustomed to superintend the processions and to edify the Christian community by spiritual masquerades, he appeared as an assistant guardian angel.

During the performances which now ensued, some pagan soldiers playing their parts somewhat too naturally upon one occasion, put him to severe bodily pain. In order, therefore, that he might take proper revenge upon them, when they subsequently enacted the mystery of the Last Judgment, he dressed them out in the gaudy robes of Kings and Emperors, and at the proper time when quite contented with their parts, they were on the point of taking precedence of all other persons, he came upon them suddenly in the shape of the Devil, and to the manifest delight of all the spectators and beggars present, after he had well punished them with his huge fork, he drove them mercilessly into the bottomless pit, where surrounded by raging flames they met with the most dreadful reception.

But he was sufficiently clever to perceive that these royal personages might not be too well satisfied with this harsh

treatment, and fearing lest they might perhaps forget the respect due to his privileged office, he silently retreated from the convent before the commencement of the millennium, and was received with open arms by a company, known as the Children of Delight, who had taken up their residence in a neighbouring town. These were a body of sensible, intellectual, and active-minded men, who were fully aware that the sum of our existence divided by reason always leaves a surprising fraction behind. They sought at appointed times to get rid of this fraction, which they found to be a perpetual impediment and even dangerous when it mingled with our general conduct. During one day in the week they played in turn the part of fools, when by means of allegorical representations they ridiculed any folly which they might have observed in themselves or others. And even if this practice were less refined than that uninterrupted education, which a well regulated mind daily observes and with which it warns and restrains its conduct, it had the advantage of being more cheerful and certain. For as no man could deny that he had some favourite folly, they treated it for what it really was; whereas in the other alternative, self delusion always allows this favourite folly the mastery, and compels reason to a secret servitude, in the belief that it has long since chased it away. The mask of folly thus went round in the society, and every one was permitted on his particular day to decorate it in a characteristic manner with his own or with a stranger's attributes. During the carnival season they took the greatest freedom, and they emulated the clergy in their endeavours to amuse and to instruct the multitude. The solemn allegorical processions of virtues and vices, arts and sciences, climates and seasons, explained a number of ideas to the people, and communicated to them notions of distant objects which rendered such games of much utility, while on the other hand the priestly mummeries only tended to confirm a tasteless superstition.

Here young Serlo was once more in his proper element. He was not possessed of any great inventive powers, but he had remarkable skill in turning to account all that he found already made, in arranging it, and rendering it useful. His good humour, his power of mimicry, his caustic wit, of

which he was allowed to make free use on at least one day in the week, even against his benefactors, rendered him useful and even indispensable to the whole company.

But his restlessness soon induced him to leave this advantageous locality that he might visit other parts of the country, where he had to enter a new school of instruction. He was now introduced to the polished, but unromantic part of Germany, where in paying honour to the good and beautiful a deficiency of spirit, if not of truth, is experienced. He could now accomplish nothing with his masks, he had to produce an effect upon the heart and upon the mind. He attached himself, therefore, for a short time to different theatrical companies, and observed upon those occasions the various peculiarities of pieces and performers. The monotony which then ruled upon the German stage, the disagreeable sound and drawl of the Alexandrine verse, the stiff dialogue, the dry common-places uttered by those preachers of morality, all these things he quickly comprehended, and at the same time he was alive to whatever moved and pleased.

His memory easily retained not only single scenes from popular pieces, but even entire plays, and at the same time he could assume the peculiar tone of the actors who had successfully performed them. At length, when his money was completely exhausted, the thought occurred to him of acting entire pieces at noblemen's houses and in the villages, with a view of providing himself with entertainment and comfortable quarters. It was his habit, therefore, to open his theatre in any tavern, garden, or apartment, where he might chance to be, when by an artful affectation of earnestness and an appearance of enthusiasm, he succeeded in winning the imaginations of his audience and deceiving their senses, by converting an old press into a tower, or changing a fan into a dagger. The warmth of youth supplied his want of deep feeling, his ardour passed for strength, and his flattery for tenderness. He reminded every spectator who was acquainted with a theatre, of all that he had already seen and heard, and in all other persons he raised an expectation of something wonderful, and a desire to understand him better. Whatever succeeded in one place was invariably repeated at another, and he experienced the most cordial

delight, when he was able, on the spur of the moment, to practise the same deception upon all the world.

His active free spirit, which nothing could restrain, was the source of his improvement, and he repeated his characters and performance with rapidity. He could soon declaim and act more in conformity with the spirit of the author, than the models whom he had previously imitated. By this means he gradually acquired the art of acting naturally. He appeared to be carried away, yet he was all the time watching the effect which he produced, and his greatest delight consisted in gradually moving the hearts of his audience. His mad pursuit compelled him before long to practise a degree of moderation, and thus partly by necessity and partly by instinct, he soon acquired the art which few players appreciate of economising the use of his voice and gestures.

Thus did he succeed in winning the attachment and the sympathy of many rude unfriendly men. At all times satisfied with food and shelter, he was grateful for every present which was offered to him, and he frequently refused money, when in his own opinion, he had received enough. He was sent from friend to friend provided with letters of recommendation, and for a long time he travelled from one nobleman's castle to another, occasioning every where general delight, and enjoying much pleasure and meeting with a succession of agreeable adventures.

The coldness of his disposition, rendered him a total stranger to love, and the clearness of his penetration disqualified him from feeling respect for others, for he never looked beyond the outer qualities of men, and these he never failed to transfer to his mimical collection. Nevertheless his vanity was hurt when he failed in giving pleasure, or in exciting universal applause. He had paid such strict attention to the arts by which this object was to be attained, and his feelings were so acutely alive upon the subject, that he could not help practising his deceits in common life as well as in his representations. And in this manner his disposition, his talents, and his mode of existence acting reciprocally upon each other, imperceptibly rendered him an accomplished performer. Thus, by a system of action and reaction, which though hardly apparent, is however wholly natural, his recitation, declamation and gesture attained by study and

practice, a high degree of truth, freedom, and ease, while in his life and conduct to others he became more reserved, artful, deceitful and constrained.

Of his fortunes and adventures we may perhaps speak in another place, and we shall only here observe that subsequently when he had become a person of some importance, possessing a certain renown, and in favourable though not settled circumstances, he was accustomed, either through irony or mockery, to act the sophist and by this means to prevent all serious conversation. In particular, he acted in this way towards Wilhelm, whenever, as frequently happened, the latter sought to engage him in general theoretical discussions. Yet they were pleased to be together, and from their opposite modes of thinking their conversation was generally animated. It was Wilhelm's habit to deduce every thing from general ideas, and always to view art in its effects as a whole. He sought to establish and to settle certain fixed rules for recognizing all that was beautiful and good, and for acknowledging whatever merited applause; in fine, he treated all things in a serious manner. Serlo on the other hand viewed every subject lightly, he never gave a direct answer to any question, but by means of an appropriate story or a jest, he introduced the neatest and most happy illustrations, and thus he instructed his companions at the same time that he amused them.

CHAPTER XIX.

While Wilhelm was thus leading a happy life, Melina and the other members of the company were in very different circumstances. They seemed to haunt our friend like evil spirits and occasioned him many a sorrowful moment, not only by their distressed looks, but by their bitter observations. Serlo had never admitted them to take any part in his performances, nor had he given them any hopes of forming an engagement, but he had nevertheless made himself acquainted by degrees with their several capabilities.

It was his custom, whenever the actors were assembled around him, to make them read aloud, an amusement in which he himself not unfrequently took part. He selected pieces which were intended for representation, but which had hitherto only been presented to the public in fragments. And after their first performance, he caused them to repeat such passages as afforded any opportunity for criticism, and thus he improved the judgment of his actors, and rendered them certain of hitting the right point. And as a weak but sound understanding may affect others more agreeably than a confused genius can possibly do, he was able frequently to improve men of moderate talents, by the clear views which he imperceptibly opened to them. His custom of causing poems to be read at their meetings contributed in no slight degree to this effect; by such a course he enabled the actors to appreciate the charm which well measured versification ever awakens in the soul; while in other companies the performance of those prose compositions had already commenced, in which the veriest stripling might excel.

Availing himself of opportunities like these, he had become acquainted with all the new actors, he knew what they were and what they might be made, and he had secretly resolved to avail himself of their talents in a revolution with which his own company was threatened. For some time he permitted the subject to rest, receiving all Wilhelm's intercessions for his companions with a shrug of the shoulders, until at length he saw his opportunity and unexpectedly proposed that Wilhelm should appear upon the stage, and that upon this condition the rest of the company should likewise be engaged.

"These people then cannot be so wholly useless, as you have been accustomed to represent them," answered Wilhelm, "if you are willing to receive them now; and it seems to me that their talents will be the same, whether I join them or not."

Serlo thereupon explained to him his situation, under a promise of secresy, informing him that his chief actor had lately shown a disposition, upon the renewal of their contract, to demand an increase of salary, a proposal to which he was not willing to accede, particularly as he had lately lost favour with the public—that in his departure he would be followed by sundry others, whereby the company would be

deprived of some good and of several indifferent actors. He then explained what he expected to gain from the adhesion of Laertes, the old man, and Madame Melina. He even promised that in the characters of Jew, minister or stage villain, the poor Pedant himself would achieve the most decided success.

Wilhelm hesitated: he heard the proposal with surprise, but in order that he might not remain wholly silent, he answered with a deep drawn sigh, "You speak in flattering terms of the merit we possess, or which you hope to find in us; but what do you think of our many deficiencies which cannot have escaped your penetration?"

"By diligence, practice, and attention," answered Serlo, "we shall soon be able to correct them. Although you are but novices and bunglers, there is none of you of whom I need despair, for there is no blockhead amongst you, and blockheads alone are incapable of improvement, whether it be conceit, stupidity, or hypochondria that renders them rigid and unmanageable."

Serlo then stated briefly the terms he intended to propose, and requesting the favour of Wilhelm's prompt decision, he left him in a slight degree of embarrassment.

In the strange composition of those fictitious travels, which he had undertaken in jest, and which he was now prosecuting with Laertes, his attention was more forcibly directed than it had ever been before, to the circumstances and daily life of the actual world. He now felt for the first time how pleasant and useful it must be to take part in so many trades and occupations, and to assist in disseminating life and activity amid the mountains and forests of his native land. The busy commercial towns which he visited, and the restlessness of Laertes who took him everywhere, impressed his mind strongly with the idea of a vast central depôt, from which every thing flows out, and into which every thing returns, and it was the first time that his mind had ever received pleasure from the contemplation of this species of activity. It was at such a moment that Serlo had made his proposal to him, awakening his desires, his wishes, his faith in his own natural talents, and reminding him of the duties which he owed to his helpless companions.

"Here I stand once more," he said within himself, "at

the Parting of the Ways, between the two women who appeared to me in my youth. The one looks no longer so miserable as she then appeared, nor is the other so glorious. The inclination to follow either, springs from an inward impulse, and the inducements from both sides are sufficiently strong. It seems impossible to make a decision. We desire a preponderance from without to determine our choice, but upon rightly examining, we shall find that they are outward circumstances alone which incline us to the pursuits of trade, of labour, and of gathering, but that our inward wants create and foster the desire to unfold and perfect those talents, whether corporal or mental, which lie within us for realizing the beautiful and the good. And should I not honour Fate, which without any effort of mine, has conducted me hither to accomplish all my wishes? Has not every thing which I had previously contemplated or planned accidentally occurred without my co-operation? 'Tis passing strange! Man seems to be intimate with nothing so much as with his own hopes and wishes which he has long preserved and cherished in his heart, and yet when they are realized, when they advance to meet him, we scarcely recognize them, and recoil before them. All the dreams which I have indulged since that unhappy night which severed me from Mariana stand now accomplished before me. To this spot it was my intention to escape,—to this spot I am softly guided.—I wished to find an engagement with Serlo,—he seeks me out, and offers me terms which as a novice I could have no reason to expect. Was it then nothing else than my love for Mariana which attracted me to the theatre? or was it the love of art which bound me to the maiden? Was that prospect—that escape upon the stage, only welcome to a restless and disorderly youth, because he wished to pursue a career which the rules of civil life did not permit? or was all this of another nature, purer—worthier? What then induced me to change my former intentions? or have I not rather unconsciously pursued my own plan hitherto? And can I not justify this final step, which is influenced by no concurrent motives now, when it affords me an opportunity of keeping my word so solemnly pledged, and of nobly discharging a heavy debt?"

Every thought which could affect his heart or move his

imagination, agitated him now in the most sensible manner. The reflection that he might still retain Mignon, and would not be compelled to dismiss the old harper, added no small weight to the balance, which continued to waver as he proceeded to pay his customary visit to his friend Aurelia.

CHAPTER XX.

He found her reposing on the bed. She appeared calm. "Do you think you will be able to act to-morrow?" he enquired. "O, yes!" she answered, "you know that nothing can prevent me. If I only knew some plan for preventing the applauses of the parterre. They are well meant, and yet they will kill me. Yesterday I thought my heart must surely break. Formerly I could endure it, when I had but myself to please. After long study and careful preparation, I rejoiced when the welcome sounds of applause echoed from every side. But now I speak no more what I wish nor as I would. I am swept along, I grow confused, and my acting produces a stronger impression. The applause increases, and then I ask, 'Are you aware what it is that enchants you? These dark, passionate, vague emotions affect you, compel your admiration, but you do not feel that they are the pangs of an unhappy being, upon which you bestow your applause.'

"This morning I learned my part, and I have just repeated and rehearsed it. I am weary—exhausted, and to-morrow I must do the same. In the evening the performance will take place. But I am indifferent to every thing. It is wearisome to rise, and fatiguing to return to bed. Every thing seems to revolve in a perpetual circle. Then come those painful consolations which I reject and execrate. I will never yield to necessity. Why should that be necessary which works my destruction? Could it not possibly be otherwise? I am paying the penalty for being a German.

It is the character of our nation to bear heavily upon every thing, and that every thing should bear heavily upon them."

"O, my dear friend!" interrupted Wilhelm, "could you but cease to sharpen the dagger with which you so perpetually wound yourself! Have you no comfort left? Are your youth, your form, your health, your talents nothing? If you lose one blessing undeservedly, must you throw all others after it? Can such a course be necessary?"

She remained silent for a few minutes, and then continued, "I know that love is loss of time, nothing but loss of time. What should I not have done? What could I not have done? But now all is vanished. I am a wretched, love-lorn creature—nothing better. Have compassion on me, I am poor and wretched."

She remained absorbed in thought, and after a short pause, suddenly exclaimed, "You are accustomed to have every thing fly into your arms. But you do not understand, no man can understand the worth of a woman who knows how to reverence herself. By all the images of blessedness which a pure and kindly heart can create, there is nothing more divine than the soul of a woman who gives herself to the man she loves! As long as we deserve the name of woman, we are cold, proud, high, clear-minded, and wise, but all these advantages we lay at your feet as soon as we love,—as soon as we hope to win a return of love. O! how designedly have I flung away my whole existence! And now for despair—deliberate despair! There flows no drop of blood within my veins that shall escape unpunished—no nerve that shall not suffer. Smile, ay! smile, if you will, at this theatrical display of passion."

But far distant from Wilhelm was every tendency to mirth. The painful condition of his friend, half natural and half excited, afflicted him too deeply. He shared the racking tortures of her distress. His brain whirled, and his blood was in a state of feverish agitation.

She had risen from her seat and was walking up and down the room. "I will know," she said, "why I should not love him. I know that he is not worthy of my love. I turn my attention to other things, and I keep myself employed,—no matter what occurs. Sometimes, I study a theatrical character, even though I do not require to act it, and I

rehearse all the parts with which I am thoroughly acquainted, and I practise them more diligently, more carefully; I rehearse them over and over again. O my friend, my trusting friend! who can tell what a painful task it is to tear ourselves from our own contemplations? My reason suffers, my brain whirls, and to save myself from madness, I again consent to think that I love him. Yes, I love, I love him!" she exclaimed, as she shed a torrent of tears, "I love him, and with this confession I am content to die."

He seized her hand, and, with a supplicating voice, he implored her not to abandon herself to such distress. "It is strange," he said, "that so much which seems both possible and impossible should be denied to men. It was not your destiny to meet with a faithful heart that should constitute your whole happiness. But it was mine to fix the whole joy of my life upon an unhappy being, who bent like a reed, and finally broke down beneath the weight of my constancy."

He had already confided his adventures with Mariana to Aurelia, and he might therefore make this allusion to them. She fixed her eyes upon him, and asked with a solemn voice, "Can you then assert that you have never betrayed a woman, that you have never sought to win her favour by thoughtless gallantry, by false protestations, or by deceitful oaths?"

"I can assert as much," said Wilhelm, "and that without much vanity. For my way of life has been so simple that I have seldom been exposed to the dangers of attempting seduction. And what a warning is your fate to me, my beautiful, my noble friend! Accept an appropriate vow which I pledge to you now, a vow which receives shape and form from the emotion which you have occasioned within me, and which is consecrated by the hour in which I pronounce it:—Henceforth I will subdue every transitory feeling of passion and bury it all within my bosom—no woman shall ever hear an avowal of love from my lips, to whom I cannot dedicate my life!"

She gazed at him with a look of wild indifference and retreated some steps, whilst at the same time she extended her hand to him. "'Tis of little consequence!" she cried, "a few woman's tears, more or less, matter not—they will not swell the ocean. And yet, that one should be saved

amongst a thousand is something—that one honourable man should be found amongst a thousand, that too is something! Do you know what you have sworn?"

"I know it well," answered Wilhelm with a smile, and extending his hand.

"I take it," she exclaimed, and at the same time she made a movement with her right hand which gave him the impression that she was about to clasp it, but quickly, with the speed of lightning, she took a dagger from her bosom and drew the point and edge across his hand. He instantly withdrew his arm, but the blood was already flowing from the wound.

"We must mark you men distinctly when we mean to beware of you," she cried, with a sort of wild glee, which was soon converted into anxious attention. With her handkerchief she bound up his hand to stop the flow of blood. "Pardon me," she cried, with a manner half insane, "and do not regret these few drops of blood. I am appeased, I am now myself again. I crave your pardon on my knees. Let me enjoy the consolation of healing you."

She went to her press, brought forth a supply of linen and other things, staunched the blood, and watched the wound carefully. The cut went through the ball of the hand close to the thumb, dividing the lines of life, and extended to the little finger. She bound it up in silence with a significant and thoughtful look. He inquired more than once, "How could you, dearest! so severely wound your friend?"

"Silence!" she replied, as she laid her finger on her lips, "silence!"

BOOK V.

CHAPTER I.

WILHELM had thus, to his former wounds, which were as yet scarcely healed, added another, which threatened to prove extremely troublesome. Aurelia would not permit him to send for a surgeon. She herself attended him, but her strange speeches and ceremonies embarrassed him beyond measure. And her restlessness and singular conduct distressed not only him but every one whom she approached, and more especially the little Felix. This quick child bore the grievance with evident impatience, and the more she censured and corrected him, the more intractable he became.

He had acquired some habits which are usually condemned, and which she never consented to encourage. For example, he was accustomed to drink out of the decanter in place of using a glass, and he generally preferred eating from the dish rather than from a plate. Such ill conduct did not pass unnoticed, and for his other faults, of slamming the door violently, or of leaving it open, of remaining motionless or running away when he received directions to do any thing, it was frequently his fate to hear a long lecture, which seldom produced the slightest effect. He seemed daily to become less partial to Aurelia, he called her "mother!" without any tenderness of tone, but was warmly attached to his old nurse, who allowed him in all things to have his own way.

But she had lately become so indisposed, that she was removed from her house into a quiet lodging, and Felix would therefore have been left quite alone, if Mignon had not appeared to him in the form of a guardian angel. The two children amused each other in the most innocent manner. She taught him a number of little songs, which his excellent memory soon enabled him to recite to the great astonish-

ment of those who heard him. She endeavoured also to explain to him the difficulties of her maps, to which she was still extremely devoted, but her method of instruction was not good. The chief interest which she felt about other countries seemed to consist in inquiring whether their climates were cold or warm. Of the North and South Poles, of the fearful ice which reigns there, and of the warmth which prevails at a distance from those regions she could give an interesting account. Upon hearing that any one had undertaken a journey, she would merely inquire whether he intended to travel towards the North or towards the South, and she would endeavour then to trace his route upon her little maps. When Wilhelm spoke of travelling, she invariably paid particular attention to him, and was extremely distressed when any thing interrupted his conversation. She could never be induced to take a part in any play, or even to enter the theatre during a performance, yet she took great pleasure in learning a few odes and poems by heart, which were usually of a serious, solemn character, and she never failed to astonish her hearers when she favoured them with one of her sudden and impromptu recitations.

Serlo, who was accustomed to mark every appearance of opening talent, offered her great encouragement. But he was most delighted with her sweet singing, which though varied, was generally of a cheerful nature, and by displaying a similar kind of talent the harper also had succeeded in winning his favour.

Although he himself possessed no skill in music, and had not even learned to play upon an instrument, he indulged in the incomparable delights of music upon every possible opportunity. He held a concert every week, and now with the assistance of Mignon, the harper and Laertes, who played upon the violin with some degree of skill, he had formed a very creditable band.

He was accustomed to say, "that men were so easily contented with common pursuits that their spirit and their senses were rendered callous to impressions of the Beautiful and the Perfect, and that it was our duty to promote a taste for those things by every possible means. For none can endure a total deprivation of such enjoyments, and it is only our want of

familiarity with the Excellent, which enables us to feel the smallest satisfaction in silly and tasteless novelties. And therefore," he would add, "we should form the habit of hearing a little song, reading a good poem, seeing an excellent painting, or uttering a sensible observation every day."

This train of thought, which was almost natural to Serlo, could not fail to supply his companions with a fund of agreeable conversation, and it was in the midst of instructive amusements of this nature that a letter bearing a black seal, one day arrived for Wilhelm. Werner's crest betokened some melancholy news, and Wilhelm was shocked to find that the letter conveyed a brief announcement of his father's death. He had died after a short and sudden illness, leaving his domestic affairs in a highly satisfactory state.

This unexpected intelligence grievously afflicted Wilhelm. He deeply felt how true it is that we often neglect our relatives and friends as long as we pursue our earthly career together, and only then repent of our indifference when the bonds of union have been untimely severed. But his grief for the death of his revered parent was in some measure assuaged by the consciousness, that during his life he had experienced in a very small degree the delights of love or happiness.

Wilhelm's thoughts were soon directed to his own situation, and the train of his reflections discomposed him not a little. Nothing can be more embarrassing for a man than to experience a great change in his external circumstances, without a corresponding alteration having taken place in his thoughts and feelings. The great crisis which has occurred is not perceived, and the contradiction becomes greater in proportion as the sufferer is less prepared to enter upon his new course of existence.

Wilhelm found himself in the enjoyment of freedom, at a time when he was far from being at ease with himself. His thoughts were noble, his intentions were pure, and his purpose was honest. All this he could proudly acknowledge to himself, but the past convinced him that he was sadly deficient in experience, and for this reason he was accustomed to attach undue importance to the advice of others, and thus he was led still deeper into error. He conceived

that he could most advantageously correct his deficiencies by noting and collecting the most remarkable things which occurred to him in his course of reading and conversation. Accordingly, he wrote down his own remarks and the observations of other persons when they appeared to him interesting, but unfortunately by this course he retained the false as firmly as the true, he became too much attached to one idea or to one principle, and thus he wandered from his natural mode of thought and action, and often followed strange lights for guiding stars. Aurelia's bitterness, and Laertes' cold contempt for mankind improperly misled his judgment, but no one had proved more dangerous to him than Jarno. The clear intellect of that man could justly and correctly appreciate present things, but he erred in the universality with which he exercised his opinions, as the judgments of the understanding should be directed with precision to each individual case, and they are usually inaccurate when applied to any other.

Thus Wilhelm was wandering further from the paths of wholesome consistency, in proportion as he sought to be at peace with himself, and in this confusion it became easy for his passions to direct all their force against himself, and to perplex him still more in his views of duty.

The sad news to which we have alluded was converted by Serlo into a matter of personal advantage. He found stronger reasons daily for thinking of re-arranging his company. He felt that he must either renew his old contract, a step to which he was not at all inclined, as several of the actors who thought themselves indispensable were daily becoming more troublesome, or he must entirely remodel the entire body, and this was a measure which he felt far more disposed to adopt.

He did not personally importune Wilhelm, but he employed Aurelia and Philina for that purpose; and as his other companions who were anxious to procure an engagement for themselves allowed him to enjoy no rest, he found himself much perplexed in coming to a decision.

Who could have supposed that a letter from Werner, written with the very opposite intention, would have compelled him to form a resolution? Omitting the introductory part, we subjoin the rest of it without much alteration.

CHAPTER II.

"—— It was, and must always be right, that a man should upon every occasion follow his vocation, and display his activity. The good old man had scarcely breathed his last, before the survivors found that nothing in the house was regulated according to his wish. Friends, acquaintances and relations came in throngs, particularly those who expected to serve themselves upon the occasion. They vied with each other in fetching, in carrying, in counting, in writing and reckoning. Whilst some brought wine and cakes, others ate and drank, and no one appeared more earnestly busy than the women, who were employed in preparing the mourning.

"You will not blame me, therefore, my dear friend, if under such circumstances, I began to think of my own interests. I became as active and as serviceable as possible to your sister, and I stated to her as soon as it was right to do so, that it was now indispensable for us to hasten a marriage, which our parents in their extreme circumspection had hitherto delayed.

"You must not suppose, however, that we thought for a moment of occupying that large empty house. We were less pretentious and more rational. But you shall hear our plan. After the wedding your sister and your mother will reside with us.

"'How is that possible?' you will probably inquire, 'since the house will scarcely furnish accommodation for yourselves.' But therein consists our art, my friend! Skilful arrangement will do wonders, and you can scarcely believe how much room they can find, who are content with scanty accommodation. We shall sell the large house, as we have found a good opportunity for the purpose, and we can invest the purchase money at a hundred per cent.

"I hope you will approve of our plan, and that you have not inherited any of those worthless tastes which belonged to your father and grandfather. The one only thought himself happy when surrounded by countless works of art, of which I will venture to say, no one ever shared the enjoyment with him. The other lived amid a display of expensive

pomp, in which he permitted no one to be happy. We intend to manage differently, and shall doubtless win your approbation.

"It is true that in the whole house I possess no place of my own, but the little spot before my writing desk, and I cannot conjecture where in the course of futurity they mean to deposit the cradle, but then, on the other hand, there is plenty of room out of doors. There are coffee houses and clubs in abundance for the husband, walks and drives for the wife, and places of public amusement for both. But our great advantage consists in this, that as the round table will be completely filled, it will be impossible for our father to invite a set of friends to dinner, who will only turn him into ridicule, in proportion as he endeavours to provide them with entertainment.

"There will be no superfluities in our house! no excess of furniture or apparatus! no carriages, no horses! Nothing but money, and the liberty of doing every day whatever we please in reason. No wardrobes, always the best and newest on the back, the husband may wear his coat threadbare, and the wife may vary her gown the moment the fashion changes. Nothing in my mind is more insupportable than a whole shop full of trumpery. If I were offered the most valuable jewel on condition that I should wear it every day, I would refuse the present, for who can enjoy the smallest pleasure in the contemplation of unproductive capital? This then is my confession of faith. To do one's business—to make money—to be happy with one's family, and as for the rest of the world only to consider how far we may employ them to our advantage.

"But I hear you inquire—what provision do you make for me in this wise arrangement? Where shall I find shelter when you have sold my father's house, and not the smallest room remains for me in yours?

"This, my dear brother, is a material point, and herein I think I can render you a service. But you must first condescend to accept my congratulations upon the admirable manner in which you have lately spent your time.

"But tell me how you have contrived, in the course of a few weeks, to become so conversant with every thing that is useful and interesting. Notwithstanding my high opinion

of your powers, I did not give you credit for so much diligence and attention. Your journal proves with what profit you are travelling. Your account of the iron and copper mines is excellent, and evinces your knowledge of the subject. I visited them once myself, but my description is very incomplete when compared with yours. Your whole letter on the linen trade is replete with information, and your observations on commercial competition are peculiarly striking. Here and there I find some trifling errors in your arithmetic, but they are, however, very excusable.

"But what chiefly delights myself and my father, is your thorough acquaintance with husbandry and the improvements of landed property. We have some thoughts of purchasing a large estate which is now under sequestration, in a very promising neighbourhood. We shall pay for it with the money arising from the sale of the family house, and partly by money which we shall borrow for the purpose, —a portion may remain unpaid. We intend that you shall proceed thither, to take charge of the improvements, and thus in a few years the land will have increased one-third in value, without any exaggeration. We can then sell it again, purchase a larger estate, and so continue to improve and traffic as before. For all this you are our man.

"In the mean time our pens at home shall not be idle, and before long we shall be in a very enviable condition.

"Now, farewell! Enjoy yourself upon your journey, go wherever you can find contentment and profit. We shall not require your services for the next six months; in the mean time you can enjoy yourself in the world, since a wise man can find the greatest of all advantages in travelling. Farewell! I rejoice at being so nearly related to you, and that we are moreover united by a similar spirit of activity."

Although this letter was admirably written, and contained a store of economical truths, it was for more than one reason displeasing to Wilhelm. The eulogiums passed upon his alleged statistical, technological, and rural information, operated upon him like a silent censure. The ideal picture which his brother-in-law drew of the happiness of civic life, was by no means pleasing to him; on the contrary, a secret spirit of contradiction inspired him strongly with the very opposite notions. He felt convinced that upon the stage

alone he could perfect the education which he sought to give himself, and in this opinion he became the more confirmed, in proportion as Werner unintentionally opposed it. He therefore collected all his arguments together, and strengthened his own opinion of their truth, conceiving it right to represent them in a favourable point of view to Werner, and in this humour he composed an answer, which we shall proceed to transcribe.

CHAPTER III.

"YOUR letter is so well written, and its thoughts are so wise and prudent, that they cannot be surpassed. And yet you will pardon me for saying, that a man's opinions, resolutions, and actions may be right, though they should be the very opposite of yours. The object of your thoughts and wishes seems to be boundless acquisition, and an easy contented mode of enjoyment. I need scarcely observe that I can find nothing in all this to charm me.

"But first I must confess with grief that under the pressure of necessity, and with the assistance of a friend, my journal was compiled from various books, with the intention of pleasing my father, and though I know something of the subjects therein mentioned, yet I am far from understanding them, nor can I occupy myself with their study. What can it avail me to manufacture good iron whilst my own breast is full of dross? Or to what purpose were it to understand the art of reducing landed estates to order, when my own thoughts are not in harmony?

"To explain myself in a word. The education of my own mind has been my constant though secret purpose, from my earliest youth. I still entertain this desire, and the means of attaining it are daily becoming clearer to me. I have seen more of the world than you suppose, and I have profited more by my experience than you would believe. Pay some attention therefore to what I am about to say, though it should not be wholly in accordance with your opinions.

"Were I a nobleman, our dispute would soon be settled,

but as I am a simple citizen, I must take my own course, and I wish you may be able to understand me. I know not how it is in other countries, but in Germany no person except a nobleman can possibly acquire a liberal and personal education. A citizen may gain distinction, and by an extreme effort may educate his mind, but his personal qualities must be lost to him, in spite of all his exertions. As the nobleman who associates with persons of distinguished rank must necessarily acquire the most elegant manners, which, as no house is ever closed to him, become at length natural and unconstrained, and since in court or in camp his figure and his person are considered valuable possessions, he has reason enough to show that he is conscious of their worth. A certain stately gracefulness in common things, and a species of light elegance in earnest and important matters becomes him well, because he thus proves that he is always at ease. He is a public character, and the more refined his movements, the more sonorous his voice, the more collected and reserved his whole deportment, the more perfect he becomes. If he always acts in the same manner towards high and low, towards friends and relatives, none can ever censure him, and none can wish that his habits should change. He may be considered cold and cautious, but he will always be thought sensible and prudent. If he can rule himself outwardly in every moment of his life, no one can make any further demands upon him, and every thing else which he possesses, capabilities, talents or riches, all appear so many unnecessary gifts.

"Now only fancy a citizen laying claim to any of these advantages, he would utterly fail, and his failure would be the more complete, in proportion as his talents and natural endowments were the more distinguished.

"Since in ordinary life the nobleman is fettered by no restraint, and from his stock kings and kingly figures emanate, he can always appear before his equals with a silent consciousness of his own dignity, and can ever press onward in his course, while nothing more becomes the citizen than a tacit consciousness of the limits within which he is restrained. The question with him is not 'what are you?' but 'what have you got? what discernment, knowledge, talent or riches?' The nobleman gives all that he has

in the display of his personal qualities, but to these the citizen can lay no claim. The former is justified in *seeming*, the latter is compelled to *be*, and all mere pretensions on his part are ridiculous and absurd. The former must do and act, the latter only contributes and procures, he must cultivate some individual talent, in order to be useful, and it is well understood that in his existence there can be no harmony, because in order to render one talent useful, he must abandon the exercise of every other.

"The cause of this difference may perhaps exist less in the assumption of the noble classes and the submission of the citizen, than in the very constitution of society, and it does not concern me much whether or in what respects any alteration may be effected, it is quite enough for me as affairs go, to think of myself and endeavour to save myself and attain an object which I find indispensable.

"I must confess that I feel an irresistible impulse to pursue this harmonious cultivation of my nature, which has been denied to me by my birth, and since our separation, practice has enabled me to accomplish much. I have got rid of much of my accustomed embarrassment, and can conduct myself with considerable ease. I have also improved in my speech and in my voice, and I may say without vanity that I make a very tolerable appearance in society. I shall not conceal that my wish to become a public character, and to widen my sphere of attraction and influence, is every day becoming stronger. To this is joined my taste for poetry, and every thing connected therewith, and the necessity of cultivating my mind in order that, in my indispensable enjoyments, I may esteem nothing but what is really good and beautiful. You will at once perceive that the stage alone can supply what I require, and that in no other element can I educate myself according to my wishes. Upon the stage the man of cultivated mind may display his personal accomplishments as effectively as in the upper classes of society, his bodily and mental endowments must improve in equal proportion, and there better than in any other place, I can assume the twofold character of seeming and of actually being. If I wish for any other employment, I can find artificial troubles in abundance, and with them I may daily exercise my patience.

"Do not seek to argue this point with me, as before you write I shall have taken the first step. In obedience to overpowering prejudices, I shall change my name, as I own I should blush at appearing as 'Meister' upon the stage. Farewell. My fortune is in such good keeping, that I need not trouble myself about it. I shall obtain all I want from you, it will not be much, for I trust that my art will prove sufficient for my support."

The letter was scarcely dispatched before Wilhelm acted pursuant to its contents, and to the great astonishment of Serlo and the rest of the company, declared that he had resolved to become an actor, and to sign a contract to that effect upon reasonable terms. An agreement was quickly made, for Serlo had long since proposed terms, with which Wilhelm and the others were abundantly content. The whole of that unhappy company, with whom we have been so long entertained, were therefore at once engaged, although with the exception of Laertes, not one of them evinced the slightest gratitude to Wilhelm. They had appealed to him without confidence, and they accepted his services without thanks. The greater part of them were rather disposed to ascribe their success to the influence of Philina, and they accordingly expressed their gratitude to her. In the meantime the contracts were prepared for signature, and by an inexplicable association of ideas, at the very moment when Wilhelm was writing his assumed name, there arose before his mind the appearance of that retired spot in the forest, where he had lain wounded in Philina's lap. He saw the lovely amazon riding through the wood, mounted on her grey charger—she approached him—she dismounted. Her friendly sympathy caused her alternately to advance and to retire. At length she stood before him. The cloak fell from her shoulders, her countenance, her form shone with inexpressible beauty, and then she disappeared. He subscribed his name mechanically without well knowing what he did, and then for the first time perceived that Mignon was standing at his side, and was making a gentle effort to hold back his arm and to restrain his hand.

CHAPTER IV.

One of the conditions which Wilhelm had exacted, before he went upon the stage, was not acceded to without some hesitation on the part of Serlo. He had required that the play of Hamlet should be acted in its entire state, and without mutilation, to which extraordinary request the latter had acceded, so far as it might be possible. But upon this point they had frequent disputes, as their opinions differed on the subject of what might or might not be possible, and also with respect to how much might be omitted, without amounting to a mutilation.

Wilhelm was in that happy season when a man cannot understand how a defect can exist in a maiden whom he loves, or in an author whom he reveres. Our sympathy with them is so complete, so wholly in accord, that we feel as if a perfect harmony existed between us. Serlo, however, made too many nice distinctions. His clear understanding would only acknowledge that a work of art was a more or less imperfect whole. He thought that as plays usually went, there was not much reason to be scrupulous about them, and therefore he conceived that Shakspeare, and more especially Hamlet, might advantageously suffer some curtailment.

But Wilhelm refused to listen to him, when he spoke of separating the wheat from the chaff. "It is not a question of wheat and chaff," he exclaimed; "here is a tree, with boughs, branches, leaves, blossoms and fruit. Is not the one inseparable from the others, and does it not exist by their means?" Serlo replied, "that no one ever brought an entire tree upon the table—that the artist presented his guests with golden apples upon dishes of silver." They exhausted their store of similitudes, but they disagreed still more in their opinions.

Wilhelm was almost reduced to despair, when Serlo advised him to adopt the simple plan of coming to a resolution, of seizing his pen and striking out from the tragedy any passage which might present a difficulty, in fine of compressing several characters into one, and he advised him if he did not understand such a proceeding or had not the heart

to execute it, to leave the task to him and he would soon dispatch it.

"That is not according to our agreement," observed Wilhelm; "how can you, with all your taste, evince so much levity?"

"My friend," replied Serlo, "you will act as I am doing, before we have been long together. I know the great objection to treating authors thus, it has probably not been practised upon any theatre in the world. But what theatre has ever been so completely neglected as ours? Authors compel us to resort to this sad mutilating system, and the public encourages it. How many pieces are there which are quite unadapted to our numbers, to our scenery, to our theatrical machinery, to the time, the talents, and the physical strength of the actors, and yet we are expected to continue performing them, and also to introduce new pieces. Are we not therefore entitled to avail ourselves of this freedom, since we derive as much profit from mutilated works as from entire productions? The public itself concedes the privilege to us. Few Germans, and perhaps few persons of any modern nation can appreciate an æsthetical whole, they blame and praise according to isolated passages, and for whom is this a greater happiness than for the actors themselves, since the stage itself is little else than a patched and mutilated affair."

"Is?" answered Wilhelm, "but must it remain so? Do not persuade me that you are right, as no power on earth shall ever prevail upon me to perform a contract into which I shall have entered under the strangest misapprehension."

Serlo turned the subject with a jest, and then persuaded Wilhelm to reflect upon their repeated conversations respecting Hamlet, and to contrive some happy alteration of the play.

After a few days spent in solitude, Wilhelm returned with a look of satisfaction. "I most sadly mistake," he exclaimed, "if I have not at last discovered how the whole affair may be managed, indeed I am persuaded that Shakspeare himself would have contrived it so, if his genius had not been wholly occupied about the catastrophe, or perhaps misled by the novels which supplied him with the incidents."

"Let us hear!" said Serlo, as he took his seat with

gravity, upon the sofa; "I will listen quietly, but I will judge with rigour."

Wilhelm proceeded: "I am not afraid. Only listen. I make two divisions in the composition of this play, after the strictest investigation and most mature reflection. The first consists of the principal internal relations of the persons and incidents, the powerful effects which proceed from the characters and actions of the chief figures, these are supremely excellent, and the order in which they are arranged is incapable of improvement. They must not be injured by any interference, nor must they even be changed in form. These are the excellencies which every one longs to see, which no one should presume to touch, and which make a deep impression on the soul. Accordingly, I have been informed that they are all introduced upon the German theatre. But our countrymen have failed in my opinion with respect to the second class of objects for which this play is remarkable. I allude to the external incidents whereby the persons are brought from place to place, or become united in different ways, by certain accidental circumstances. These they have wholly omitted, or have considered as unimportant. It is true that these threads are somewhat slack and delicate, though they certainly run through the entire piece, connecting what would otherwise be wholly disunited, and which in truth does actually become so, when you have severed them, and fancy that you have achieved something by leaving the ends remaining.

"By external incidents I mean the disturbances in Norway, the war with young Fortinbras, the embassy to his aged uncle, the arranged feud, the departure of young Fortinbras for Poland, and his eventual return; likewise the return of Horatio from Wittenberg, Hamlet's desire to proceed thither; the journey of Laertes to France, his return; the despatch of Hamlet to England, his capture by pirates, and the death of the two courtiers through the medium of the letter. All these incidents might serve very properly to swell the dimensions of a novel, but they injure the unity of a piece, in which the hero acts without any settled plan, and are in every way objectionable."

"Now I listen to you with pleasure!" exclaimed Serlo.

"Do not interrupt me," said Wilhelm; "in all probability

you will not continue to praise me. These mistakes resemble the temporary supports of a building, which you dare not remove, without having previously built a firm wall as a substitute. My plan, therefore, would not alter those grand situations, or at least would interfere with them collectively and individually as little as possible, but would not hesitate to reject at once all those external and distracting motives, and substitute a single one in their place."

"And what may that be?" asked Serlo, rising from his seat.

"It will be found already in the play," answered Wilhelm; "I should only require to make a proper use of it. I allude to the disturbances in Norway. But I will endeavour to explain my plan.

"After the death of the elder Hamlet, the lately subjugated Norwegians become discontented. The ruler of the country sends his son Horatio to Denmark. He had been a former schoolfellow of Hamlet, and had excelled all his cotemporaries in prudence and bravery. It was intended that he should expedite the preparation of the fleet, which had made but slow progress under the administration of the new luxurious monarch. Horatio had been acquainted with the former king, having fought in his battles and having been counted among his favourites—events which could by no means impair the effect of the first ghost scene. The new monarch receives Horatio, and sends Laertes to Norway with news that the fleet will soon arrive, whilst Horatio is ordered to hasten the preparations. Hamlet's mother however will not consent that her son shall proceed to sea with Horatio, pursuant to his wish."

"Thank Heaven!" cried Serlo, "we shall thus escape Wittenberg and the College, with which I have always felt annoyed. I approve of your plan highly, for with the exception of those two distant objects, Norway and the fleet, the audience need not exercise their imaginations, they will *see* every thing, all will take place before their eyes; whereas, according to the other plan, the imagination is busied in every part of the world."

"You may perceive without difficulty," said Wilhelm, "how I intend to preserve the connection of the rest. When Hamlet informs Horatio of his stepfather's crime, the latter

advises him to proceed to Norway, to ingratiate himself with the army, and to return at their head. Hamlet is now becoming dangerous to the King and Queen, and they can find no better means of disposing of him than to send him to the fleet, accompanied by Rosencrantz and Guildenstern as spies upon his actions. But Laertes returning in the mean time, they resolve that that youth who is exasperated even to a determination to commit murder, shall be sent after him. The fleet is detained by adverse winds. Hamlet once more returns, his wandering in the churchyard may be contrived by some opportune circumstance, and his encountering Laertes at the grave of Ophelia is a grand and indispensable event. The King now conceives it more advisable that Hamlet should be got rid of at once; the ceremony of his departure and his apparent reconciliation with Laertes are joyously celebrated. Knightly sports are accordingly held, and the combat ensues between Hamlet and Laertes. Without the four corpses the piece could not be ended. It would not do that a single one of the parties should survive. A popular election ensues for the choice of a king, and Hamlet's dying voice supports Horatio."

"Sit down instantly," cried Serlo, "and finish the piece. Your conception has my entire approbation. You must not allow your zeal to cool."

CHAPTER V.

Wilhelm had been for some time engaged in the translation of Hamlet, and had used Wieland's spirited edition of that author, through whom indeed he had first become acquainted with Shakespeare. He now added whatever had been omitted in the original, and was in possession of a complete copy of the play at the very time when he had come to an agreement with Serlo about the mode in which it should be treated. In pursuance of his plan, he now commenced to erase, to insert, to separate, to unite, to alter, and again to restore, but however satisfied he might be with his own ideas, it still seemed to him, that in the execution he was only spoiling the original.

As soon as he had completed his task, he read it over to Serlo and the other members of the company. They expressed themselves delighted, and Serlo indulged in many complimentary observations.

"You have very properly decided," he said, amongst other things, "that certain external circumstances are essential to this piece, but they should be more simple in their nature than the great poet has represented them. All that takes place outside the theatre, which the audience cannot actually see, and must therefore imagine for themselves, serves as a species of background before which the acting figures move. Your large and simple view of the fleet and Norway will improve the piece considerably. If they were removed nothing would remain but a mere family scene, and the noble idea of a royal house perishing, by the effect of internal vice and crime would not be pourtrayed with becoming dignity. But the original background is so varied, so uncertain and confused, that it would injure the effect of the characters."

Wilhelm once more defended Shakespeare, maintaining that his work had been writen for islanders, for Englishmen, who are accustomed to ships, and voyages to the coasts of France, and to privateers, and that what seemed quite natural to them, proved perplexing and distracting to others.

Serlo assented, and both agreed that as the play was to be produced upon the German stage, the former scenes and more simple background would answer better for the representation.

The characters had been already distributed. Serlo undertook Polonius, Aurelia played Ophelia, Laertes the part designated by his name, a stout cheerful youth, who had lately arrived, assumed the character of Horatio, but the King and Ghost occasioned some difficulty. The old man, it is true, was ready for either, and Serlo proposed that the Pedant should play the King, against which Wilhelm uttered the loudest protests. They could not come to any decision.

Wilhelm had retained the two characters of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in his adaptation. "Why have you not joined those two characters together?" inquired Serlo, "the abbreviation could be very easily made."

"I can permit no such curtailment," answered Wilhelm, "it would injure both the sense and the effect. The spirit of these two characters cannot possibly be represented by a single person. It is in trifles of this nature that Shakespeare exhibits his greatness. How could one man express the varied emotions of these two individuals, their soft approaches, their flatteries, their bowings, their assentings, their obsequiousness, their failings, their yieldings, their wheedlings, their assumption, their emptiness, their knavery, and their ineptitude? They would require a dozen characters at least, if they could be found. It is only in society that they could be effectual,—in fact, they are society, and Shakespeare proved his sagacity and wisdom in contriving two such characters. I require them, moreover, as contrasts to the simple, noble, and excellent Horatio."

"I understand you," said Serlo, "and we can manage it easily, by giving one of the characters to Elmira. It will be all right if they only look well, and I will dress and arrange them so that it will be a pleasure to behold them."

Philina felt delighted that she was to act the Duchess in the by-play. "I will show it to be quite natural that a woman should marry a second husband instantly, notwithstanding her intense love for her first. I expect I shall receive the loudest applause, and that every one shall wish he were the third."

Aurelia looked displeased at this observation. Her dislike of Philina seemed to increase daily.

"It is a pity we cannot have a ballet," remarked Serlo, "we might then introduce a pas de deux between you and your two first husbands, the old harper might be lulled to sleep by the music, and your pretty little feet and ancles would look so charming upon the side stage."

"You know very little about my ancles," answered Philina pettishly, "and as for my feet," she continued, reaching down under the table and taking off her slippers, which she held up before Serlo, "here are their cases, and I defy you to find a prettier pair."

"Well I own it would be difficult," said he, looking at the diminutive slippers, "one does not often see anything half so charming."

They were of Paris workmanship; Philina had received

them as a present from the Countess, whose foot was remarkable for its beauty.

"It is a sweet sight!" said Serlo, "my heart beats at the very prospect."

"How it throbs!" replied Philina.

"There is nothing more delightful than a pair of slippers of first-rate workmanship," continued Serlo, "and yet their sound is more charming even than their beauty." He took them and let them fall several times alternately upon the table.

"What do you mean?" said Philina, "give them back to me."

Philina took them from him, exclaiming, "You have squeezed them till they are quite spoiled; you have made them too large." She began to play with them, rubbing the soles together. "How warm they are!" she cried, as she held one of them to her cheek; then rubbing it once more and holding it out to Serlo, he was complaisant enough to feel, when she cried, "Clip, clap!" and at the same time gave him a smart knock on the knuckles with the heel, which made him scream and draw back his hand. "I will teach you how to joke about my slippers," said Philina, with a smile.

"And I will teach you how to treat old people like children," cried Serlo in reply, leaping up and seizing her, and kissing her repeatedly, in spite of her pretended efforts to resist him. During the struggle, her long hair had fallen down and streamed around the group, the chair had been upset, and Aurelia, inwardly vexed at such unseemly conduct, arose in a state of indignation.

CHAPTER VI.

Although in recasting the play of Hamlet, many characters were omitted, a sufficient number remained; so many, in fact, that the company was scarcely sufficient for its performance.

Under these circumstances," observed Serlo, "the

prompter must issue from his retreat, become one of us, and turn actor."

"He has often won my admiration in the post which he fills," observed Wilhelm.

"I do not think that there can be a more perfect assistant than he is," added Serlo. "Whilst no spectator can hear him, we actors can catch every syllable he utters. He seems to have formed his voice expressly for his art, and is like our good genius who whispers to us intelligibly in time of necessity. He thoroughly comprehends that portion of the actor's part in which he is perfect, and knows from a distance where his memory is likely to fail. More than once, when I have scarcely read over my part, he has repeated it to me word for word, and I have got through successfully. He has, however, some peculiarities which would render another person wholly useless. He takes such a cordial interest in some pieces, that, though he does not declaim them he recites them with too much pathos, and he has more than once quite put me out by this objectionable habit."

"And another of his peculiarities," observed Aurelia, "caused me upon one occasion absolutely to break down in my part."

"How could that happen with so attentive a person?" inquired Wilhelm.

"He becomes so deeply moved at certain passages," answered Aurelia, "that he actually sheds tears and quite loses himself, and they are not exactly the most pathetic parts which produce this effect. They are, to express my meaning clearly, those beautiful passages, from which the pure spirit of the poet looks forth with bright beaming eyes; passages at which some rejoice deeply, but which many thousands entirely overlook."

"And possessing such tender feelings, why does he not appear on the stage?"

"A hoarse voice and a formal carriage exclude him from it, and his melancholy nature shuts him out from society," answered Serlo. "How have I laboured in vain to make him intimate with me? He reads admirably, as indeed I have never heard another read, and nobody better understands the delicate boundary between declamatory and pathetic recitation."

"We have found the man we want," cried Wilhelm. "What a fortunate discovery! He is the very man to recite the passage of 'The rugged Pyrrhus.'"

"It requires your talent," said Serlo, "to turn every object to its proper use."

"Indeed, I was sadly afraid," said Wilhelm, "that we should have been obliged to omit that passage, and it would have injured the whole performance."

"I cannot precisely see that," answered Aurelia.

"But I hope you will soon agree with me," said Wilhelm. "Shakespeare has introduced the travelling players with a double object. In the first place, the man who recites the death of Priam with so much pathos, produces a deep impression on the Prince himself; he awakens the conscience of the doubting youth, and thus the scene becomes the prelude to that act in which the little play exerts such a powerful effect upon the King. Hamlet feels himself rebuked by the actor, who can become so warmly interested in fictitious woes, and the thought of testing the conscience of his stepfather is thus suggested to him. What a glorious soliloquy is that which concludes the second act! How delighted I shall feel when I recite it!

"'O! what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
Is it not monstrous that this player here,
But in a fiction—in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit,
That from her working all his visage waned:
Tears in his eyes,—distraction in his aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit! And all for nothing!
For Hecuba! What's Hecuba to him,
Or he to Hecuba, that he should weep for her?'"

"If we could but bring our hero upon the stage!" said Aurelia.

"We must accomplish the plan gradually," replied Serlo. "He may read the passage at our rehearsal, and we can say that it is intended for an actor whom we expect, and thus we may by degrees approach our object."

When they had agreed upon this point, the conversation turned upon the character of the Ghost. Wilhelm would not consent to give the part of the living King to the Pe-

dant, that so the old man might play the Ghost: he proposed that they should rather wait a little, as some ther actors were expected, and amongst them they might pe haps find a more suitable person.

We may therefore conjecture Wilhelm's astonishment, when upon his return home that evening, he found the following note lying upon his table, sealed with a strange cypher, and addressed to him in his theatrical name:—

"We know, O singular youth! that thou art in a state of great perplexity. Thou canst scarcely find actors for Hamlet, to say nothing of the Ghost. But thy zeal deserves a miracle. We cannot work miracles, and yet something miraculous shall happen. Only have faith and the Ghost shall appear at the proper time! Courage! be collected! No reply is necessary, we shall know thy decision."

He hastened to Serlo with this extraordinary note, who read and re-read it, and at length said with a grave air that it was a matter of some importance, and they should consider whether they might risk it. They turned the subject in a thousand lights; Aurelia in the mean time remained silent, smiling occasionally, and when she adverted to the topic a few days afterwards, she expressed her firm opinion that it was a joke of Serlo's. She desired Wilhelm to cease his anxiety, and to expect the Ghost with patience.

Serlo was in the best of humours. The actors who were on the point of leaving the company exerted themselves to the utmost in order that their absence might be missed, and from the zeal of the new performers the most favourable results were anticipated.

Wilhelm's society had produced a decided influence upon Serlo. He now conversed more about art; but he was a German, and these people seldom give much account of themselves. Wilhelm took notes of many of their conversations, but as we cannot so frequently interrupt our narrative, we must communicate the substance of them to our readers upon some other occasion.

One evening, Serlo was very merry in his remarks about the character of Polonius, and the manner in which it should be performed. "I shall endeavour," he said, "to represent a very worthy man in a favourable light. I shall exert myself to pourtray his various characteristics in a

becoming manner, his repose and confidence, his emptiness and self-importance, his pliancy and meanness, his candour and sycophancy, his sincere roguery and deceptive truth. I will paint this grey-headed, time-serving, and patient old rogue in the most courtly colours, and the occasionally bold strokes of our author's pencil will prove of some service to my task. I will speak like a book where I am prepared, and like a simpleton when I am in good spirits. I shall be absurd enough to coincide with every one, and clever enough never to notice when I am turned into ridicule. I have not often found a part which affords me so much malicious satisfaction."

"I wish I could hope as much from mine," observed Aurelia. "I am neither young nor sufficiently tender-hearted to like my character. Of one thing, however, I am unfortunately conscious. I shall not be deficient in the feeling which turns Ophelia's brain."

"We must not look at the character so strictly," said Wilhelm, "for I am satisfied that my anxiety to play Hamlet has caused me to commit many errors in my study of the part. The more I consider the performance, the more plainly I perceive that I possess no single trait of feature or of form such as Shakespeare has intended for his hero; and when I consider how intimately every part is connected, I despair of producing a proper effect."

"You are commencing your new course of life with a becoming feeling of conscientiousness," observed Serlo. "The actor adapts himself to his character as well as he can, the part must suit itself to him. But how has Shakespeare pourtrayed his Hamlet? Is it so completely unlike you?"

"In the first place, Hamlet is a fair-haired youth," answered Wilhelm.

"That is a far-fetched idea," said Aurelia. "Where do you find it?"

"He is a Dane—a Northman, and of course fair-haired and blue-eyed by descent."

"Do you suppose the thought occurred to Shakespeare?"

"I do not mean to say that it is actually expressed, but in connection with other passages it seems to me undeniable. The fencing wearies him, he becomes easily heated by the

exercise, and the Queen remarks, 'He is fat and scant of breath.' Can you suppose that he is otherwise than fair and well-conditioned? Dark haired people in their youth are of a very different constitution. And does not his melancholy and inactivity, his soft sorrow, and his perpetual indecision agree better with such a figure than with that of a slender, dark haired youth? From the latter, you would expect more determination and resolution."

"You are destroying my ideal of the character," cried Aurelia. "Do not talk of a fat Hamlet! Do not think of him as a stout prince. Give us rather a character that will move and delight us. The intention of the author is of less consequence than our pleasure, and we require a charm suited to our ideas."

CHAPTER VII.

One evening the company was engaged in discussing the question whether the novel or the drama was better entitled to the favour of the public: Serlo, maintained that an argument upon such a question could be productive of no result, as both kinds of composition might be excellent in their way, although each should be restrained within its own proper limits.

"I am not quite certain about that," said Wilhelm.

"Who can be so?" replied Serlo, "and yet it were perhaps worth while to examine the subject more closely."

After a long conversation the following may be considered as the result of their discussion.

Human nature and human action are pourtrayed equally in the drama and in the novel. And the difference which exists between these two kinds of fiction, does not merely consist in their outward form, that is to say, in the fact that in one case the hero speaks, whilst in the other, his adventures are only narrated. It happens, unfortunately, that many dramas are but novels, which are carried on by means of dialogue; and it would be quite easy to compose a drama in the epistolary form.

In the novel, however, sentiments and events are specially delineated—in the drama, characters and deeds. The course of the novel is necessarily slow. The sentiments of the principal character must by some contrivance impede the too rapid development of the plot. But the drama should hasten forward, and the character of the hero should unfold itself quickly and require an artificial restraint. The hero of the novel should be passive, or at least he should not be active in a high degree, but in the drama we look for action and deeds. Grandison, Clarissa, Pamela, the Vicar of Wakefield, and Tom Jones himself, are if not passive, at least retarding characters; and all the incidents are formed upon the model of their sentiments. But the hero of the drama models nothing for himself, all the events oppose him, and he either clears and removes every obstacle from his path, or else he becomes their victim.

Every one agreed that in the novel something might be left to the operation of chance; subject, however, to the constant control and guidance of the sentiments expressed by the several characters; whilst, on the other hand, that fate which impels men forward in spite of themselves to an unexpected catastrophe by the instrumentality of outward independent circumstances, can only be admitted in the drama; they were moreover of opinion that chance might occasion pathetic, but never tragic situations; that fate on the other hand should always be terrible, and become in the highest degree tragic, when it confounds the guilty and guiltless in one common ruin.

These reflections led them back to the consideration of the wonderful character of Hamlet, and the peculiarities of that tragedy. They admitted that the hero was a creature of sentiment rather than of action, that events alone impel him forward, and therefore that the play possessed somewhat the characteristics of a novel. But inasmuch as the plan is sketched by the hand of Fate, commencing with a fearful deed, and the hero is ever urged on to the accomplishment of a deed of terror, the play becomes in the highest degree tragic, and can have no other than a tragic termination.

They resolved now to commence their reading rehearsals, an employment to which Wilhelm had looked forward with the greatest delight. He had long since

collated the different parts of the play, so that his task was rendered comparatively easy. All the actors were familiar with the piece, and it was therefore only necessary to convince them of the importance of these reading rehearsals before they took them in hand. As it is expected that every musician should, to some extent, be competent to play at sight, so every actor and indeed every educated man, should possess the art of reading from the book, and of seizing the spirit of a play, a poem, or a narrative, and he should be able to read them aloud with ease and elegance. It will answer no end to learn a piece by heart, if the actor cannot penetrate into the sense and meaning of his author—the mere letter will avail nothing.

Serlo promised to excuse the attendance of the performers at all the acting rehearsals, even at the concluding one, if they would only endeavour to do justice to these reading exercises, "for usually," he said, "nothing can be more ludicrous than to hear actors speak of study, it is as if free-masons were to talk about building."

The rehearsals succeeded admirably, and it may be said truly, that the subsequent success and favourable reception of the company were founded upon these few well employed hours.

"You were right," observed Serlo, when they found themselves again alone, "to address our fellow labourers in an earnest tone, though I doubt whether they will completely fulfil your wishes."

"Why so?" inquired Wilhelm.

"I have often found," replied Serlo, "that though it may be an easy task to move the imaginations of men, and though they may listen eagerly to works of fiction, yet we seldom find that they are gifted with any great productive powers of fancy. This is more especially the case with actors. Each of them is quite pleased to accept a beautiful and brilliant part, but he seldom does more than complacently assume his hero's place, without once considering whether he is competent to fill it. But to seize with spirit the exact conception of the author, to know how completely you should forget yourself in order to do justice to a character, to feel deeply that you are another individual, to carry conviction home to the bosom of the spectator, and by the inward force of imagi-

nation to convert the stage into a temple, and the scenes into reality, this is a talent which belongs to few. That inward strength of soul, by means of which deception is produced, that lying truth by which alone the height of illusion is attained, these are qualities of which few persons can ever form even a distant conception.

"But let us not insist too strongly upon the necessity of spirit and of feeling. Our safest course will be, first, patiently to instruct our actors in the sense and meaning of their parts, and so teach their understanding. Such of them as possess the adequate talent, will afterwards readily acquire a forcible and pathetic expression, and the others will be saved from the danger of acting or declaiming altogether falsely. But we should remember that actors cannot commit a greater error than to think they can understand the spirit of their parts, so long as they are not complete masters of the sense and letter of their author."

CHAPTER VIII.

It was yet early when Wilhelm arrived for the first rehearsal. He found himself alone in the theatre. The appearance of the place surprised him, and brought back the strangest recollections to his mind. The representation of a wood and of a village which the scenery exhibited, exactly resembled what he had seen in the theatre of his native town. It was at a rehearsal which took place on that morning when Mariana first confessed her love, and promised him a happy interview. The peasants' cottages were so like each other both on the stage, and in nature; and the rising sun was shining though a half-open shutter, and its rays fell upon the corner of a bench, which was rudely joined to a cottage door, but unfortunately, they did not now shine upon Mariana's waist and bosom. He sat down and thought over this strange coincidence, half expecting that she might perhaps appear upon this very spot. The real fact however was, that an afterpiece to which this scenery belonged, was at that time frequently performed upon the German stage.

Wilhelm was roused from his reflections by the arrival of the other actors. They were accompanied by two friends who were patrons of the drama, and were accustomed to go upon the stage. They saluted Wilhelm with much cordiality. One of them was a warm admirer of Madame Melina, the other was entirely devoted to theatrical art, and both were general favourites with the company. It was not easy to say whether their acquaintance with the stage, or their attachment to it was the greater. But they loved it too well to know it thoroughly, and they knew it sufficiently well to choose the good and to reject the bad. Mediocrity was to them intolerable and the cordial enjoyment with which they relished the anticipation and the recollection of excellence was inexpressible. The mechanical part of the profession afforded them pleasure, the intellectual gave them delight, and their love for the stage, was so strong that even an interrupted rehearsal was to them a species of illusion. Defects in their eyes disappeared in the distance, success touched them like familiar objects. In fine they were amateurs of whom every artist would be proud. Their most favourite walk was from the stage to the parterre, and from the parterre to the stage, their happiest place was behind the scenes, their most active occupation had relation to the dress, the acting, the recitation, or performance of the company, whom they always endeavoured to support; their most earnest conversation was about the effect which the actors produced, and they never ceased their efforts to render the performers attentive, accurate and active, to do them a favour or a service, or to contribute to their enjoyment without encouraging extravagance. They had both received the exclusive right of attending the theatre during rehearsals and performances. With respect to the character of Hamlet, they did not in all respects agree with Wilhelm, and though he had yielded to them in one or two particulars, he had for the most part firmly maintained his own opinion, and upon the whole their intercourse contributed considerably to the improvement of his taste. He had frequently testified his high opinion of them, and they foresaw nothing less from their united exertions, than the entire reformation of the German stage.

Their presence was found very useful at rehearsals. They laboured to convince the performers that their action

and attitudes should at such times be in entire conformity with the passages which they recited, in order that by habit the whole might be united mechanically together. No ordinary movement of the hands should be allowed during the rehearsal of a tragedy—they trembled for a tragedian who took snuff upon such occasions, fearing lest upon the recurrence of the passage in the actual performance the actor might possibly miss his pinch. They also objected to boots being worn at a rehearsal, when the character required that the part should be performed in shoes. But nothing distressed them more than when the actresses in rehearsing buried their hands in the folds of their dresses.

In addition to all this, the persuasions of these amateurs produced another very good effect—all the actors were instructed in the drilling exercise. For where military characters are so constantly introduced, they felt that nothing could be more painful than to see men in captains' and majors' uniforms, strutting about the stage, without the least regard to discipline.

Wilhelm and Laertes were the first who submitted to the instructions of a subaltern officer, and they availed themselves of the opportunity, zealously to resume their practice of fencing.

In this manner did these patrons of the stage exert themselves for the improvement of the actors, who had by chance been brought together. And while strangers were amused at the peculiarity of their taste, they were nevertheless labouring for the future amusement of the public. And people little knew how much they had to be thankful for, particularly for the zeal with which they impressed upon the actors, the important duty of never failing to speak in a loud and intelligible tone. Upon this point they encountered a greater degree of hostility and opposition than they could have believed possible. Most of the actors wished to be heard in their natural voices, and few of them would take the trouble to speak so that they could be understood. Some laid the blame upon the building, others maintained that it was wrong to shout when their parts required that they should speak in a quiet, natural, or tender tone.

Our two amateurs, who possessed an inexhaustible store of patience, exerted themselves to correct this mistake, to

subdue this determined obstinacy. They spared neither arguments nor flatteries for the purpose. They triumphed at length, and were mainly indebted for their success to the kind offices of Wilhelm. In pursuance of his invitation they took their seats, during the rehearsal, in the farthest corner of the theatre, and he requested that whenever he was not distinctly heard, they should knock upon the bench with a key. Accordingly he spoke out plainly and deliberately, raising his voice gradually, and never over exerting himself, even in the most excited passages. As the rehearsals proceeded, the sound of the key became less frequently heard. The other actors soon consented to undergo the same tuition, and the company at last had reason to hope that the play would be heard without difficulty in every part of the house.

We may see from this example, how anxious men always are to effect their object in their own way, how necessary it often becomes to convince them of truths, which are even self-evident, and how difficult it frequently is to persuade men who have a definite purpose in view, of the primary conditions under which alone their design can succeed.

CHAPTER IX.

They continued to make the necessary preparations for the scenery and dresses and for whatever else was necessary. Wilhelm had certain fancies of his own respecting some of the scenes and passages of the play, which Serlo generally indulged, partly in consequence of his agreement, and partly because he thought they were correct, and because he hoped by these concessions to make a friend of Wilhelm, and reconcile him more easily to his own plans.

The King and Queen, for example, were to appear at the opening scene, seated upon their thrones, surrounded by their courtiers, whilst Hamlet stood undistinguished amotngs them. "Hamlet," he said, "must remain quiet, his mourning dress will render him sufficiently distinct. He should

rather avoid than seek observation; and not until the audience has terminated, and the King addresses him as a son, should he advance, when the scene may proceed in its course."

But a great difficulty was presented by the two pictures, to which Hamlet refers in the passionate scene with his mother. "It seems to me," said Wilhelm, "that they ought both to be displayed at full length in the back ground of the chamber, near the principal entrance. The elder King should be painted in full armour like the Ghost, and should hang at the side where the latter makes his appearance. I could wish that the figure assumed a commanding attitude, with the right hand extended, the face a little turned away, with a look directed over the shoulder, that it may perfectly resemble the Ghost at the very instant when the latter disappears through the door. It would produce a great effect if Hamlet at that moment should fix his eyes upon the Ghost, and the Queen should look upon the picture. The stepfather may appear in royal costume, but not in very rich attire."

Many other topics of this nature were discussed, of which we may, perhaps, find another opportunity to speak.

"Are you inexorable that Hamlet should die at the conclusion of the play?" inquired Serlo.

"How can I keep him alive," asked Wilhelm in reply, "when every thing requires that the piece should finish with his death? But we have already fully discussed this point."

"But the public wishes him to live."

"I will gladly gratify the public on any other point, but upon this it is impossible. You know we often wish that some brave and useful man, who is dying of a chronic disease, might live a little longer. The family weeps and supplicates the physician, but the latter cannot save him; and as he is unable to resist a necessity of nature, we cannot overcome an acknowledged necessity of art. It is a false compliance with the wishes of the multitude to waken the emotions which they wish to indulge, in place of those which they ought to feel."

"But whoever pays his money can require the goods to be according to his fancy."

"Unquestionably. But a great public is entitled to our

respect, and should not be treated like children from whom one wishes merely to extract money. By accustoming them to what is good, we may lead them gradually to feel and to appreciate the excellent, and they will pay their money with double satisfaction when their reason and understanding approve the outlay. We may flatter the public as we do a favourite child, for its improvement and instruction, but not to perpetuate an error from which we expect an advantage."

Thus were many things discussed in relation to the inquiry how far they might still venture to alter the play, and what portions they might leave wholly untouched. We shall leave this subject for the present, and possibly upon some future occasion we may submit the new reading of Hamlet to such of our readers as feel any interest in the matter.

CHAPTER X.

The first rehearsal had taken place, and lasted much longer than had been expected. Serlo and Wilhelm still found many things to perplex them, for notwithstanding the long time they had devoted to the preparations, many important matters had been postponed to the last moment.

For instance, the pictures of the two Kings were not yet ready, and the scene between Hamlet and his mother, from which so powerful an effect was anticipated, seemed very incomplete, inasmuch as neither the Ghost nor his painted resemblance were forthcoming. Serlo joked at the disappointment, saying, "We shall be rather badly used if the Ghost refuses to appear: the guards in that case will be obliged to fight with the air, and the prompter must supply the Ghost's speeches from the side scenes." "We ought not to scare away our mysterious friend by our incredulity," observed Wilhelm, "he will doubtless come at the proper time, and surprise us no less than the spectators."

"Well! at all events, I shall be glad," cried Serlo, "when the piece has been acted. It has given us much more trouble than I had expected"

"No person in the world will rejoice more than I shall, when it is over," added Philina, "notwithstanding that my part has not given me much trouble. For to hear only one topic for ever spoken of, from which, after all, nothing can be expected but a representation, which will soon be forgotten, like its predecessors,—I have not patience for that. Do not, I beseech you, suggest so many difficulties. Guests, when they rise from table, have always something to object against the entertainment, and if you could only hear their observations, you would not wonder that they complained of the severe inflictions they had endured."

"Allow me, Philina!" said Wilhelm, "to employ your illustration for my own purpose. Think how much must be accomplished by nature and art, by traders and men of business, before an entertainment can be given. How many years the stag must rove in the forest, the fish swim in the river or the sea, before they are worthy to grace the festive board! And then consider how much the housekeeper, the cook, and her assistants have to effect! And mark the indifference with which your friends consume the products of the distant vintage, the rarities which seamen and merchants have provided, regarding them as things of course. And can you expect that these men should abandon their labour, their toil, and their preparations, or that the careful householder should cease from providing and collecting, because, forsooth, the enjoyment of such delicacies affords but a transitory pleasure. In effect, however, no enjoyment is transitory, the impression which it leaves behind is lasting, and whatever is accomplished with diligence and toil imparts a secret force to the spectator, of which it is impossible to overestimate the effect."

"I am indifferent to all this," interrupted Philina, "I need only repeat my remark that men are a perpetual contradiction to themselves. For with all your conscientious disinclination to mutilate Shakespeare, you have omitted the most beautiful passage in the whole play."

"The most beautiful passage?" exclaimed Wilhelm.

"Undoubtedly," said Philina, "and one which afforded the most extreme delight to Hamlet himself."

"What do you allude to?" enquired Serlo.

"If you wore a wig," replied she, "I would pluck it from your head, for you require to have your wits sharpened."

The rest of the company were lost in thought, and a pause ensued in the conversation. They rose from their seats—it was growing late, and they seemed disposed to separate. Whilst they were standing together in a state of indecision, Philina commenced a song which was set to a very sweet and agreeable air.

Sing no more in strains of sadness
Of the loneliness of night!
Darksome hours were made for gladness,
Social joy, and love's delight.

Gift to man from bounteous heaven
Comes that precious boon—his wife;
So is night to mortals given,
As their better part of life.

How can noon-day hours elate us,
Checking joy's impetuous tide?
Daylight hours may recreate us,
But are good for nought beside.

But at midnight softly glowing,
When the stars shine pale above,
And from lip to lip are flowing
Joy and all the charms of love—

When the youth so wild and daring
Yields to Beauty's magic power,
Captive to her charms ensnaring,
Lingering in her roseate bower—

When the nightingale is wringing
Lover's bosoms with her strain,
To the sad and weary singing
Piteous notes so full of pain—

Then with hearts so joyous beating,
Hearken to the distant bell,
Midnight's solemn hours repeating,
Which of peace and transport tell.

Therefore when of daylight weary,
Tender youths, forget not this!
That though day be long and dreary,
Midnight hours are full of bliss.

She made a slight curtsey upon coming to the end, whereupon Serlo greeted her with loud applause. She then ran to the door, and rushed from the room with a burst of laughter. They heard her singing and laughing as she tripped lightly down stairs.

Serlo retired to an adjoining apartment, and Aurelia remained alone with Wilhelm. He wished her good night, but she looked at him attentively for some minutes, and then said,

"How I loathe that girl! I loathe her from my very heart! even to the very least of her qualities. Her dark eyelashes which my brother finds so charming, I cannot endure, and the scar upon her forehead is so repulsive, so vulgar, that I shudder whenever I see her. She told us a few days ago, as a joke, that when she was a child, her father flung a plate at her head, of which she now bears the mark. It is well that she can be so easily recognized by her eyes and forehead, that those about her may beware!"

Wilhelm returned no answer, and Aurelia continued in a tone of still greater anger.

"I find it impossible to address her in a polite and friendly manner, so intensely do I hate her, notwithstanding all her artifices. I wish we could get rid of her. And you, my friend, always treat her with a certain degree of kindness, which grieves me to the very soul, you show her an attention which looks like respect, and of which she is by no means worthy!"

"Whatever she may be," replied Wilhelm, "I owe her a debt of gratitude, and though her conduct is blameable, I must be just to her natural character."

"Her character!" exclaimed Aurelia, "and do you think that such a creature can have a character? O! you men, how well I understand you, you are worthy of such women."

"And can you entertain a suspicion of me, my kind

friend?" enquired Wilhelm. "I can account for every minute which I have ever spent in her company."

"Well, never mind," added Aurelia, "it is growing late, and we must not quarrel. But they are all alike. Good night, my friend! Good night, my brilliant Bird of Paradise."

Wilhelm asked how he had become entitled to that honourable designation.

"Some other time," cried she, "some other time. They say it has no feet, but is always on the wing, and lives on ether. But that is a fable," she continued, "a mere poetic fiction. Good night, may your dreams be pleasant, if you are happy."

She proceeded to her apartment and left him alone. He immediately retired to his.

He walked discontentedly up and down the chamber. The jocular but decided tone of Aurelia had annoyed him. He felt keenly how unjust she had been. It was impossible that he could be unkind or illnatured to Philina. She had not injured him, and he felt so wholly indifferent to her, that he could proudly congratulate his conscience upon the subject.

He was about to draw his curtains that he might retire to bed, when to his great astonishment, he saw a pair of lady's slippers lying on the ground. They were Philina's, he recognized them instantly. He fancied also that he could observe a certain degree of disorder about the appearance of the bed curtains—it seemed indeed as if they moved. He stood and stared with fixed eyes.

An emotion, like anger, deprived him of his breath, but recovering himself after a short pause, he exclaimed in a firm voice—

"Rise, Philina! What can this conduct mean? Where is your prudence, your modesty. To-morrow morning we shall be the conversation of the whole house."

Nothing stirred.

"I am not jesting," he continued, "and I do not like these tricks."

No sound! no motion!

Angry and determined, he at length went towards the bed and tore the curtains asunder. "Get up," he said, "or I will leave my chamber to you for the night."

With the greatest astonishment he found the bed empty, and the pillow and counterpane quite undisturbed. He looked about, searched everywhere, hunted in every corner, but could find no trace of the rogue. Behind the bed, behind the stove, in the presses, there was nothing to be seen, though he searched with the greatest diligence. A malicious spectator might have supposed that he was seeking with a wish to find.

Sleep had now quite forsaken him. He placed the slippers upon the table, walked hastily up and down the room; he then stood still—and a wicked spirit who observed him, maintains that Wilhelm spent the greater part of the night playing with those pretty slippers, that he regarded them with deep interest, took them in his hands, toyed with them, until towards morning he threw himself upon the bed in his clothes, and fell asleep amid the strangest fancies.

In fact he was still asleep, when Serlo entered his apartment, exclaiming, "What! still in bed, impossible! I have been looking for you at the theatre, where so much still remains to be done."

CHAPTER XI.

The morning and the afternoon passed rapidly away—The theatre was already crowded, and Wilhelm hastened to dress for the performance. But he did not now feel the joy which he had experienced when for the first time he had assumed the character—he dressed for no other purpose than that he might be ready in time. Upon joining the actresses in the green room, they exclaimed unanimously that no part of his attire became him—that his beautiful feather was awry—the buckle of his hat did not fit: and they accordingly commenced to rip, to sew and to remodel his dress. The music began—Philina had some objection to make against his collar, Aurelia found fault with his mantle. "Leave me, my kind friends," he at length exclaimed, "this appearance of negligence will make me more resemble Hamlet." But the dies would not consent to leave him; they continued their

attentions. The music had now ceased, and the piece commenced. He looked at himself in the glass, pressed his hat upon his brow and retouched his cheek with rouge.

At this moment a person rushed in with a cry of "the Ghost, the Ghost!"

Wilhelm had not found time all day to think of the important question whether the ghost would appear or not. But his fears were now removed, and he waited for the appearance of some strange assistant. The manager came in frequently, asking various questions, but Wilhelm had no time to enquire about the Ghost; and he proceeded to appear before the throne where the King and Queen shone in full splendour, surrounded by their brilliant court; he just caught the last words of Horatio's address, who was speaking in a confused manner of the Ghost's appearance, and seemed to have almost forgotten his part.

The curtain rose. He saw a crowded house before him. After Horatio had delivered his address and had been dismissed by the king, he hastened to meet Hamlet, and as if for the purpose of introducing him to the Prince, he exclaimed, "the Devil stands there clad in armour, and has fearfully alarmed us all."

Two men attired in white mantles and hoods, were in the mean time observed standing in the side scenes. In the embarrassment, hurry and distraction of the moment, Wilhelm had failed in his first soliloquy, but loud applause had nevertheless accompanied his exit, yet it was with a certain uncomfortable feeling of dissatisfaction, that he commenced the scene in which he describes the nipping air of the cold wintry night. But he took courage and gave the appropriate passage respecting the feasting and drinking of the Danes with proper composure, forgetting, like the rest of the spectators, the appearance of the Ghost, till he shrunk back in alarm when Horatio exclaimed, "Look, my lord, it comes!" He turned round suddenly, and the tall, noble figure, which advanced with slow and inaudible step, the noiseless movement notwithstanding the heavy armour, all impressed him so powerfully, that he stood petrified and could only say in a half audible voice, "Angels and ministers of grace defend me!" He stared at the apparition, gasped for breath, and pronounced his address to the Ghost

in a style so confused, so interrupted and so constrained, that the greatest art could not have succeeded half so well.

His own translation of the passage now rendered him good service. He had kept close to the original, as the very order of the words seemed to him to express a mind surprised, alarmed, and seized with horror.

> "Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damned,
> Bring with thee airs from heaven, or blasts from hell,
> Be thy intents wicked or charitable,
> Thou com'st in such a questionable shape
> That I will speak to thee—I'll call thee Hamlet,
> King—father—royal Dane—O, answer me!"

The audience was deeply affected. The Ghost beckoned, and the Prince followed him amid the loudest applause.

The scene changed, and when they had both reached a distant spot, the Ghost suddenly paused and turned round, when Hamlet was brought into close proximity to him. Wilhelm peered with anxious curiosity between the bars of the lowered helmet, but could only discern two deeply seated eyes and a well formed nose. Timidly he surveyed the Spirit, but at the first sounds which came from the helmet, when a deep toned and sonorous voice uttered the words, "I am thy father's spirit!" Wilhelm started back several paces in dismay, and the spectators shared his terror. It seemed as if everybody recognized the voice, and Wilhelm thought he could detect a resemblance to that of his father. These extraordinary sensations and recollections, the curiosity he felt to discover his mysterious friend, and his unwillingness to offend him, and even the error into which he had fallen of approaching him too nearly, affected Wilhelm with conflicting emotions. He changed his place so often during the long address of the Ghost, his air was so confused and perplexed, he seemed so attentive, yet so absent, that his acting excited universal admiration, whilst the Ghost inspired the spectators with a general horror. The latter spoke with a voice of subdued anger rather than of sorrow, but his anger was spiritual, calm and enduring. It was the disappointment of a noble soul, separated from all earthly cares and yet succumbing to eternal woe. At length he disappeared in a remarkable manner. A light grey transparent gauze

arose like vapour from the chasm, seemed to envelop him and sank down with him to the shades below.

Hamlet's friends now entered, and took their oath upon the sword. And the spirit was then so busy under ground, that wherever they stood, the cry of "Swear!" always seemed to come from beneath their very feet, whilst they hastened from place to place, as if the ground under them was on fire. A little flame, which, upon these occasions, shot up from below, seemed to increase the effect, and produced a deep impression upon the spectators.

The play now proceeded uninterruptedly, without any tendency to failure. Its success was complete. The audience testified their satisfaction; and the pleasure and the courage of the actors increased with every scene.

CHAPTER XII.

The curtain fell; and tumults of applause resounded from all parts of the house. The four royal corpses sprang up, and joyfully embraced each other. Polonius and Ophelia came out of their graves, and listened with the greatest satisfaction, as Horatio, who announced the repetition of the play, was received with the loudest marks of approbation. The audience would not permit any other play to be spoken of, but loudly required the present piece to be repeated.

"We have succeeded at last," cried Serlo, "and so we must not utter another sensible word this evening! Everything depends upon the first impression. No one can blame an actor for being provident and self-willed upon his first debût."

The box-keeper now made his appearance, and handed Serlo a large sum of money. "We have made a capital beginning," he exclaimed, "and the favourable opinion of the public will now assist us. But where is our promised supper? We must enjoy it this evening."

They had arranged that the whole company should assemble in their acting dresses, and have a feast. Wilhelm

had made the arrangements, and Madame Melina had laid out the entertainment.

An apartment, which, upon other occasions was used as a painting room, had been properly prepared, and adorned with all sorts of decorations, and looked partly like a garden, and partly like a colonnade. The company upon entering were dazzled with the brilliancy of the lights, which shed a radiance over a highly ornamented and well-furnished table, from which a vapour of the most fragrant odours ascended. The preparations were universally praised, and the guests took their places with an assumed air of dignity. It seemed as if some royal family had assembled together in the kingdom of the shades. Wilhelm was seated between Aurelia and Madame Melina, Serlo between Philina and Elmira. No one was dissatisfied, either with himself or with his place.

Our two theatrical patrons, who were also present, added to the happiness of the company. During the representation, they had several times appeared upon the stage, and could not sufficiently express their own delight or the satisfaction which animated the public. They condescended now to enter into details, and the exertions of the whole company were loudly extolled.

The services of all the actors, and the beauty of every passage were in turn commended in the most hearty manner. Even the prompter, who had modestly taken his place at the end of the table, was warmly praised for the passage of "the rugged Pyrrhus." The fencing-scene between Hamlet and Laertes was highly admired. Ophelia's sorrow had been inexpressibly beautiful and exalted. Of Polonius, one could scarcely say too much, and in fine every individual present received an appropriate tribute.

Even the absent Ghost received his share of applause. He had pronounced his speeches with a most impressive voice, and with a lofty conception of his character; but it excited general surprise that he had seemed so well informed about the affairs of the company. He resembled the portrait as closely as if he had sat to the artist for his picture, and the two amateurs, highly approved the effect which had been produced by the spirit when he entered, near the picture, and crossed over the stage before his own

image. Truth and error had been strangely mingled, and every one felt convinced that the Queen had not observed the mysterious form. Madame Melina also received her share of applause for having fixed her eyes wildly upon the picture, at the time when Hamlet stood pointing to the Ghost.

They now enquired by what means the spirit had obtained admission to the theatre, and they learned from the manager, that a side door, which was generally blocked up by decorations, had been left open that evening, as the Gothic hall had been required; and they were informed that two tall figures, wrapped in white mantles and hoods, who could scarcely be distinguished from each other, had gained admittance by that entrance, and had probably disappeared in the same manner, at the end of the third act.

Serlo praised the Ghost particularly for not having whined like a tailor; and for having, at the conclusion, introduced a passage which was worthy of a hero, in order to encourage his son. Wilhelm still retained it in his memory, and promised to add it to his manuscript.

In the excitement of the feast, it had escaped observation, that the children and the Harper were not present. But they soon made their appearance, dressed in romantic attire. Felix was playing upon the triangle, and Mignon carried a tamborine. The old Harper had his harp suspended from his neck, upon which he played as he went along. They made a little procession round the table, and sang a multitude of songs. They were richly feasted, and the guests conceived that they rendered the children a great favour, by giving them as much sweet wine as they could drink. Indeed, the company themselves had not spared the bottles, which the two amateurs had contributed as a present upon the occasion. The children danced and sang without interruption, but Mignon was more lively than she had ever been before. She played upon the tamborine with great skill and grace, at one time with her finger pressed against the parchment, she hummed quickly across it to and fro, then she struck it with her knuckles or with the back of her hand, and then changing the time, she struck it upon her head or against her knee, or shaking the little bells, she allowed them to ring by themselves, and in this manner from the most simple

of instruments, she elicited a great variety of sounds. After the children had amused themselves for a considerable time, they sat down in an arm-chair, which was standing empty at the table exactly opposite to Wilhelm.

"Keep away from the chair!" cried Serlo, "it is intended for the Ghost, and should he appear, he may treat you ill."

"I do not fear him," answered Mignon, "if he comes, we can rise. He is my uncle, and will not injure me." This speech was an enigma to all those who did not know that her reputed father had been called "The great devil."

The actors looked at each other; and their suspicions were strengthened that Serlo knew something about the appearance of the Ghost. They chatted and drank together, and the girls from time to time looked with fearful glances towards the door.

The children, who were seated in the large arm-chair, their heads scarcely reaching higher than the edge of the table, resembled the puppets in Punchinello, and they soon commenced to give an imitation of that entertainment. Mignon imitated the nasal tone of the figures admirably, and they knocked their heads together against the edge of the table, in a way that only wooden images could endure. Mignon was in the highest state of excitement, and the company, who had laughed heartily at the beginning of the performance, were at length obliged to interfere. But entreaties were vain, for she sprang up and raved, running round the table with the tamborine in her hand. Her hair was streaming over her shoulders, and with her head held back, and her limbs flung wildly in the air she resembled a figure of the ancient Mœnades, whose strange and almost impossible attitudes upon antique monuments fill us with astonishment.

Excited by the noise and talents of the children, the other guests contributed also to the general amusement. The young ladies sang several duets, Laertes imitated the singing of the nightingale, and the pedant played a concert *pianissimo* upon the jew's harp. The rest of the company amused themselves with various sorts of games, and their hands coming continually into close contact they indulged in many an affectionate pressure, which gave evidence of well-intentioned kindness. Madame Melina did not fail to evince

her warm partiality for Wilhelm. It was now growing late, and Aurelia, the only person who seemed to preserve her self-composure, rising from her seat, reminded the others that it was time to retire.

Serlo closed the entertainment with fireworks, giving with his mouth an inconceivably clever imitation of the explosion of rockets, crackers, and catherine-wheels. It was only necessary to close your eyes to render the illusion complete. At length they all rose to depart, and the gentlemen offered their arms to the ladies, to conduct them to their homes. Wilhelm followed the others, accompanied by Aurelia. The manager of the theatre met them on the stairs, and said, "Here is the veil in which the ghost disappeared. He left it behind him at the place where he vanished; and we have only this moment found it." "An interesting relic!" exclaimed Wilhelm, as he took possession of it.

He was seized at the same instant by the left arm, and he felt considerable pain. Mignon had rushed from her hiding place, where she had been concealed, and bit his arm. She passed him quickly on the stairs, and disappeared.

Upon coming into the open air the company at once perceived that they had enjoyed themselves too freely. They separated without taking leave of each other.

Wilhelm undressed himself immediately upon gaining his apartment, and having extinguished his candle hastened into bed. He was about to fall asleep, when his attention was attracted by a noise which seemed to issue from behind the stove. Just then the figure of a king in full armour appeared to his imagination, he rose up in his bed to address the Ghost, when he felt himself suddenly locked in the embrace of two tender arms, his mouth was closed with a shower of the most passionate kisses, and he felt a bosom pressed against his own, from which he had not resolution to disengage himself.

CHAPTER XIII.

On the following morning, Wilhelm started up with a feeling of discontent and found his bed unoccupied. His mind was still confused with the tumult of the preceding night, from which he had not fully recovered, and the recollection of his mysterious nocturnal visitant rendered him uneasy. His first suspicion fell upon Philina, and yet she was not the person whom he had held in his arms. He sprang to his feet, and whilst dressing, he observed that his door, which he usually locked was unfastened, though he could not remember whether he had secured it on the previous night.

He was above all things astonished at the sight of the ghost's veil, which was found on his bed. But as he had brought it with him, he had probably thrown it there himself. It was of grey gauze, and upon the border a sentence was worked in black letters. He unfolded it and read the words, "For the first and last time—fly, youth, fly!" He was surprised and knew not what to say.

Mignon entered just at this moment with his breakfast. Wilhelm was astonished, nay alarmed at the appearance of the child. She appeared to have grown taller during the night, she approached him with a proud, noble look, and surveyed him so anxiously that he could not meet her eye. She did not touch him, though she had always been accustomed in the morning, to press his hand, or to kiss his cheek, his lips, his arm, or his shoulder, and after she had arranged his things, she withdrew in silence.

The time which had been appointed for a rehearsal having now arrived, our friends all assembled, though they had not recovered from the effects of the previous day's entertainment. Wilhelm exerted himself to his utmost, that he might not be the first to violate those principles of regularity which he had so lately broached. The facility which he had acquired from long practice helped him through, for in every art, habit and practice will always supply the deficiencies which genius and temper so often leave unfilled.

Our friends had good reason to observe, in the present

instance, the truth of the observation, that a pursuit which is intended to be followed for a continuance, such as a business or a profession, ought never to be commenced with a festivity. Festivals are proper when an enterprise has been successful, but ceremonies at the commencement only waste the zeal and strength which should be husbanded to encourage us during our struggle, and to support us in a laborious career. But of all festivals, marriage feasts seem most inappropriate: calmness, humility, and quiet hope would seem especially becoming at such a season.

Thus did the day pass over, and to Wilhelm it had proved particularly insipid and interesting. When evening arrived, instead of indulging in their usual conversation, the company began to yawn. The interest which they had hitherto taken in the play of Hamlet, seemed to be exhausted, and they were all disappointed that the play was to be repeated on the following evening. Wilhelm produced the ghost's veil in evidence that the unknown performer of that character had no intention of appearing again. Serlo was likewise of this opinion; he seemed to have been admitted into the confidence of the ghost, but then, on the other hand, the words, "fly, youth, fly!" were upon this supposition not easily explained. How could Serlo have conspired with any one to deprive the company of their most accomplished actor.

It now became essential to provide a substitute for the character of the ghost, and they resolved to make the Pedant play the King. Both parts had been already thoroughly studied, and it was not surprising after so many rehearsals, and so ample a discussion of the play that all the actors had become perfectly familiar with it, so that each might readily have exchanged his part with that of his neighbour. They proceeded nevertheless with the rehearsal, but they went through it hastily, and when they were on the point of separating, Philina approached Wilhelm and whispered to him softly as she passed, "I must have my slippers back again, and you must not bolt the door." The words perplexed Wilhelm beyond measure, as he reflected upon them in his chamber. The suspicion that the ghost of the preceding night had been Philina, was thereby considerably strengthened; and we must ourselves coincide in this

idea, particularly as we are prevented from explaining the reasons which awakened in our friend's mind, another suspicion of a similar nature. He continued to pace his room in a restless state of mind, and he had not yet bolted his door, when Mignon rushed suddenly into the apartment exclaiming wildly, "Save the house! it is on fire." Wilhelm ran to the door and he became instantly enveloped in a dense smoke which issued from the upper story. A cry of fire had been raised in the street, and the harper appeared upon the stairs breathless from the smoke, carrying his instrument in his hand. Aurelia ran from her chamber, having thrown the little Felix into Wilhelm's arms.

"Only save the child!" she exclaimed, "and we will see after every thing else."

Wilhelm who did not consider that there was any great danger, wished to find out where the fire had originated, that he might extinguish it at once. He accordingly committed the child to the care of the Harper, desiring him to descend the stone stairs which led through a little vault into the garden, and to wait with the children in the open air. Mignon carried a light to shew the way, and Wilhelm begged Aurelia to deposit her things in the same place. He himself endeavoured to force his way through the smoke, but in vain did he boldly encounter every danger. The flames seemed to proceed from a neighbouring house, they had already communicated to the woodwork of the floor, and the small flight of stairs, and some other persons who had hastened to his assistance, were suffering like himself from the effects of the vapour and the flames. Nevertheless he continued to encourage them, calling loudly for water, imploring the bystanders to redouble their exertions and promising to stand by them to the last. At this moment Mignon came running towards him, exclaiming, "O, master! save little Felix, the old Harper is mad, he is killing him." Without taking a moment to reflect, Wilhelm rushed down the stairs and Mignon followed close behind him.

He was petrified with horror upon reaching the foot of the stairs which communicated with the garden. Some heaps of straw and firewood which had been collected on the spot, were burning with a fierce flame. Felix lay crying upon the ground; the Harper with his head sunk

upon his bosom, stood leaning against the wall. "What are you doing, wretched man!" cried Wilhelm. The Harper was silent, Mignon raised Felix and carried him with difficulty through the garden, whilst Wilhelm exerted himself to disperse the faggots and to extinguish the flames. At length he was compelled with burnt hair and singed eyelashes to make his escape into the garden, dragging the old man with him through the flames who, with his beard all consumed, reluctantly accompanied him.

Wilhelm without loss of time sought for the children. He found them at the entrance of a summer house at some distance, and Mignon was exerting herself to quiet her little companion. Wilhelm took the boy in his lap, asked him some questions, examined him to ascertain if he had sustained any injury, but could gain no satisfactory information from either of the children.

The fire had now communicated to several houses, and illuminated the whole neighbourhood. Wilhelm examined the child in the bright glare of the flames, but he could not observe no blood, no wound, no injury of any kind. He pressed little Felix with his hand, but the latter gave no sign of pain. By degrees he became tranquil, seemed to wonder at the fire, and to evince delight at the sight of the blazing rafters and frames which were burning with the regularity of an illumination.

Wilhelm did not bestow a thought upon his own losses. He only felt how dear to him were the two creatures whom he had succeeded in saving from so sad a fate. He kissed the little Felix with fresh rapture, and was about to embrace Mignon also, but she gently disengaged herself from him, and seizing him by the hand, held it firmly in hers.

"Master," she said—before that evening, she had scarcely even addressed him by such a title,—at first she used to call him, Sir, and subsequently Father,—"Master! we have escaped a fearful danger; little Felix was at the point of death."

Wilhelm learned, upon making inquiry, that the Harper having descended into the vault, had snatched the light from Mignon's hand, and had set fire to the straw. He had then placed the little Felix down, and having made some strange gestures, had laid his hands on the head of the child,

and drew forth a knife as if he had intended to sacrifice him. Mignon rushed forward and snatched the knife from him, and alarmed at her loud screams, some person had rushed from the house to her assistance, but had retired again in the confusion, leaving the Harper and the child alone.

Two or three houses were now in flames. In consequence of the conflagration in the vault, no one had taken refuge in the garden. Wilhelm was uneasy about his friends, and also, though in a minor degree, about his own property, and as he did not dare to leave the children, he was obliged to look on in silence and to watch the increase of the misfortnne.

He spent some hours in this painful situation. Felix had fallen asleep in his lap. Mignon was lying at his side, and still held his hand clasped in hers. The exertions of the bystanders finally extinguished the flames. The burning houses were in ruins, the morning dawned, the children felt the cold intensely, and even Wilhelm who was clad in light attire, suffered from the extreme chilliness of the falling dew. He led the children to the ruins and they warmed themselves amongst the ashes and the embers of the fallen buildings.

The early morning brought together by degrees the various friends and acquaintances of the party. They had all escaped, and no one had sustained the slightest loss.

Wilhelm's trunk had been once more saved. When it approached ten o'clock, Serlo summoned them to a rehearsal of Hamlet, at least of those scenes in which new players were to act. But some objections to the intended entertainment were offered by the police authorities. The Clergy, moreover, expressed a wish that after such a judgment of Providence, the theatre should remain closed, but Serlo maintained, on the contrary, that in order to repair his own losses, and to cheer the depressed spirits of the people, the performance of some interesting play was essential. This opinion prevailed, and the house was full. The actors displayed unusual energy and performed with more than their accustomed success. The spectators were more disposed to relish something out of the ordinary routine, as their feelings had been roused by the terrors of the preceding night, and their desire for entertainment had been excited by the tedium of an anxious and unprofitable day. The greater part of the spectators were new, and had been

brought together by the reputation of the piece, and they could not institute any comparison between the present and the past evening. The new actor played the Ghost's part and the Pedant successfully imitated the character of his predecessor, finding his own woe-begone condition of especial service to him, and notwithstanding his purple cloak and ermine collar, it was impossible to deny that Hamlet was right in styling him "a king of shreds and patches."

A more singular path had never conducted a monarch to the throne, and although the other actors, and especially Philina jested about his promotion, he himself asserted that the Count, who was an excellent judge, had from the very first made this prediction about him. On the other hand Philina recommended him to practise humility, saying that she would powder the sleeve of his coat, to remind him of the luckless night which he had passed in the castle, in order that he might wear his crown with becoming modesty.

CHAPTER XIV.

The company had been obliged to provide themselves hastily with new apartments, and they were in consequence widely separated from each other. Wilhem took a fancy to the garden house, where he had taken refuge on the night of the fire. He according procured the key without much difficulty, and established himself in those quarters, and as Aurelia's new abode was small and inconvenient he kept possession of Felix, and it was impossible to induce Mignon to separate from the little boy.

The children had been placed in a nice little apartment on the first floor, whilst Wilhelm resided in the lower room. The children soon fell asleep, but he sought repose in vain.

Close to the lovely garden, which the rising moon had just illuminated, stood the melancholy ruins, from which the smoke was still ascending. The air was pleasant and the night was extremely beautiful. Upon leaving the theatre, Philina had touched him with her elbow, and whispered something in his ear, which he did not exactly understand.

He felt puzzled and perplexed, and scarcely knew what he ought to do, or what he should anticipate. Philina had avoided him of late, although she had to-night given him a second signal. Unfortunately the doors were wholly consumed, which he had been cautioned not to bolt, and the perplexing pair of slippers had been reduced to ashes. He was at a loss to conjecture by what means she intended to procure admission to the garden, if such was her design. He felt no wish to see her, and yet he would very willingly have heard any explanation which she might desire to offer.

But he felt most of all perplexed about the fate of the Harper, who had not been seen since the fire. Wilhelm was afraid that in removing the rubbish, his body might be found among the ruins, and he had very carefully concealed the suspicion which he entertained, that the old man had been the author of the fire. He had first seen him as he rushed from the conflagration and smoke of the house, and the fearful adventure in the vault, seemed to be the result of that desperate deed. And yet from the examination which the police had instituted, it seemed probable that the fire had not commenced in the house where Wilhelm had resided, but in the third dwelling from that, and had been communicated from the adjoining roofs.

Wilhelm was seated alone in a bower in the garden, reflecting upon the accident which had occurred, when he heard a low footstep in an adjoining walk. He at once recognized the old Harper, by the melancholy strain which met his ear. The song which he could easily comprehend, had for its subject the consolation of a wretched being, conscious that he was about to fall into insanity. Unfortunately Wilhelm could only remember the concluding stanza.

> When to the mansions of the good
> The Minstrel's footsteps meekly stray,
> Some pious hands shall bring him food,
> And he will then pursue his way.
> Whene'er his pilgrim form appears,
> Each friendly heart with joy shall glow,
> And every eye be filled with tears,
> Though he their cause may never know.

Having finished his song, he proceeded to the garden door, which communicated with the neighbouring street,

but finding it locked, he endeavoured to climb over the railings. Wilhelm however held him back, and addressed him in a friendly voice. The old man implored him to unlock the gate, as he was determined not to be kept a prisoner. But Wilhelm represented to him that though he might succeed in escaping from the garden, he could not possibly do so from the town, and he explained moreover the suspicious light in which his conduct would thus appear. But all in vain—the old man seemed resolved. But Wilhelm would not yield, and leading him half by force into the garden house, he locked the door upon the Harper and himself. They now entered into a strange conversation together, but that we may not distress our readers with a detail of so many unconnected subjects, and disagreeable emotions, we had rather omit them than relate them at length.

CHAPTER XV.

On that same morning, the advice of Laertes relieved Wilhelm from the perplexity in which he found himself, as to the course which he ought to take with this unhappy man, who shewed undoubted signs of madness. Laertes when roaming through the town as usual, happened to meet with a stranger in a coffee house, who for some time, had suffered extremely from violent attacks of melancholy. He had been placed under the care of a country clergyman, who made it his especial business to take charge of persons so afflicted. He had proved successful in the case to which we allude, he was now in the town and the friends of his patient were paying him the greatest honour.

Wilhelm hastened to find out the clergyman; he related the case and they soon agreed about the terms. It was determined that the Harper, by some means or other, should be committed to his charge. The separation which ensued pained Wilhelm deeply, and nothing but the hope of soon seeing him once more restored to his reason, could afford

him any relief, so accustomed had he become to the society of the old man, and to the delight of his inspired and soothing strains. His harp had been burnt in the fire, but they had procured another for him, and had presented it to him upon his departure.

Mignon's little wardrobe had also been consumed, and when they were about to provide her with new apparel, Aurelia proposed that they should dress her as a girl.

"No, no!" she cried, and insisted so obstinately, that they where compelled to let her have her own way.

The company had not much time for reflection, the performances proceeded without interruption.

Wilhelm was diligent in ascertaining the general opinions of the public upon the performance of Hamlet, but criticisms were seldom offered which he found it agreeable to hear, and he was compelled much more frequently to listen to remarks which filled him with vexation and annoyance. For instance after the first performance, a young man related that he had been highly amused, that evening, at the threatre. Wilhelm listened attentively, and heard the youth describe how he had obstinately kept his hat on during the entire entertainment, to the great annoyance of those who were behind him, and he now looked back upon his heroic conduct with feelings of the highest satisfaction.

Another person remarked that Wilhelm had played the character of Laertes with great judgment, but that no one could possibly approve of the manner in which the part of Hamlet had been performed. This mistake, however, was not wholly unnatural, as Wilhelm and Laertes resembled each other in a slight degree.

A third critic warmly praised his performance, especially in the scene with his mother, only regretting that in one of the most exciting passages a white strap should have appeared beneath Hamlet's waistcoat, by which the illusion was wholly destroyed.

Many changes were taking place, in the mean time, amongst the other members of the company. Since the evening subsequent to the fire, Philina had not paid Wilhelm the least attention. She had hired an apartment situated at a distance from his, formed an intimacy with Elmira, and visited Serlo very seldom, a course of conduct, which

seemed to be particularly gratifying to Aurelia. Serlo who was still partial to her, went to see her frequently, especially when he hoped to meet Elmira in her company. One evening he took Wilhelm with him. They were both very much astonished, upon entering the house, to see Philina in an inner apartment, locked in the embraces of a young officer, who, they could observe, was dressed in a scarlet uniform and wore white pantaloons, but his face was turned away in such a manner that they could not distinguish his features. Philina advanced to meet her visitors as they entered the anteroom, at the same time shutting the door of the apartment which she had just left.

"You have caught me," she exclaimed, "in the very middle of a strange adventure!"

"Not so strange after all!" observed Serlo. "But let us see this pretty young enviable friend of yours," he continued, "you have us all in a state of such complete control, that there is no fear of our proving jealous."

"I must leave you to your own conjectures for the present," said Philina in a tone of raillery, "I assure you, however, that my visitor is a lady, who wishes to remain in concealment for a few days. You shall hear her whole history at the proper time—perhaps you may even be introduced to my interesting friend herself, and then I may require to exercise all my prudence and discretion, for I am not without some apprehensions that the gentlemen may forget me in this new acquaintance."

Wilhelm stood as if petrified. At the very first glance the scarlet uniform had reminded him of Mariana, the figure and the fair hair which he had seen were hers, though perhaps the officer might have been a little taller.

"For heaven's sake!" exclaimed Wilhelm, "give us further information of your friend. Let us see this disguised lady. We have been entrusted with your secret, we will promise, or will swear not to divulge it—only let us see the lady."

"How excited he is!" said Philina, "but be calm and have a little patience, you shall learn nothing from me to-day."

"Only tell us her name!" cried Wilhelm.

"Then it would be a precious secret, indeed!" answered Philina.

"Well, her Christian name at least."

"You may guess it, if you like. You shall have three guesses, no more, otherwise you might lead me through the whole calendar."

"Well!" said Wilhelm, "Cecilia!"

"No!"

"Henrietta!"

"Not at all! Take care, or your curiosity will remain unsatisfied."

Wilhelm paused and trembled. He tried to speak, but could not. "Mariana!" he stammered out at length, "Mariana!"

"Bravo!" cried Philina, "You have guessed it," and she whirled round on her heel according to her usual custom.

Wilhelm was dumb—and Serlo, who did not observe his emotion, entreated Philina to open the door of the apartment.

To the astonishment of both of them, Wilhelm suddenly put a stop to their raillery, by throwing himself at Philina's feet, begging and imploring her with the most earnest supplications to let him see the lady. "She is mine!" he exclaimed, "she is my Mariana! She for whom I have been so long pining, she who is dearer to me than all the women in the world! Go to her, and tell her that I am here—I who devoted to her all my earliest feelings of love and the unsullied happiness of my youth. Say he will explain satisfactorily why he left her unkindly—he will implore her forgiveness, he will pardon her, forgive her all her offences, and withdraw all his pretensions, if she will only let me see her—if I may convince myself that she is alive and happy."

Philina shook her head, and replied, "My friend, whisper low, do not betray us! If the lady is really your friend, you must spare her feelings, for she has no idea that you are here. Far different business has brought her hither, and you know right well that there are times, when one would rather encounter a ghost, than a former lover. I will speak to her and prepare her, we can then consider what is best to be done. I will write you a note to-morrow, naming an hour for an interview, or saying whether she will meet you at all. Obey me punctually, for I vow that no person shall see the lady without her own and my permission. I shall

lock my doors securely, and you will scarcely venture to burst them open."

Wilhelm entreated, Serlo implored—but all in vain. They were compelled to yield, and they left the apartment and the house.

We may easily conceive that Wilhelm spent a sleepless night, and that the hours passed drearily away whilst he lay in expectation of a note from Philina. Unhappily he was obliged to act that evening, and never had he endured more intense agony. As soon as he had finished his part, he hastened to Philina's residence, without inquiring whether he had received an invitation. He found the doors fastened, and the servants stated that she had started off at an early hour in the morning, accompanied by a young officer; that she had said something about returning in a few days, but that they did not believe her, as she had paid all her accounts in the neighbourhood, and had taken her things with her.

Wilhelm was distracted at this information. He went at once to Laertes, entreating that he would pursue her and employ every means, and run every risk, to obtain information about her companion. Laertes rebuked Wilhelm for his sudden passion aad for his easy credulity. "I would wager a trifle," he said, "that it is only Friedrich. I know perfectly well that he is of good family, and that he is desperately in love with Philina, and probably he may have succeeded in obtaining a sum of money from his friends, and this will enable them once more to live together for a time."

Wilhelm half believed these statements, although they were not sufficient to convince his reason. But Laertes sought to persuade him of the great improbability of the tale with which Philina had endeavoured to amuse them all, reminding him how closely the officer resembled Friedrich both in his figure and in the colour of his hair, assuring him that with the twelve hours start which the fugitives had obtained, they could not easily be overtaken, and that above all things, Serlo could not possibly dispense with their presence at the theatre.

These arguments finally persuaded Wilhelm to abandon his intention. Laertes, that same evening, procured an active messenger to whom the task of pursuing Philina was entrusted. He was a steady person, who had frequently

acted as a guide and courier to travellers, and he was at that moment without employment. They supplied him with funds and gave him all necessary instructions, desiring him to find out the fugitives, to keep his eye upon them, and instantly to inform Wilhelm where and how he might overtake them. He started on horseback that very hour in pursuit of Philina and her companion, and by these means Wilhelm partly succeeded in recovering his usual composure

CHAPTER XVI.

Philina's absence did not produce any extraordinary sensation either within the walls of the theatre or in the public mind. Her character was wholly devoid of earnestness, her fellow-actresses thoroughly disliked her, and the men relished her company far more during a *tête-a-tête*, than upon the boards. For these several reasons her talents for theatrical display were not sufficiently appreciated. The different members of the company now exerted themselves to the utmost to supply her place, and Madame Melina's zeal and diligence in this respect were very remarkable. She was a follower of Wilhelm's principles, was thoroughly guided by his theories and example, and her conduct had lately undergone a most favourable change. Her acting had become correct, her tone of conversation was now natural, and in her delineation of lively motion she was much improved. Moreover, she humoured Serlo in all his particular fancies, she exerted herself to please him with her singing, and she succeeded so far as to render herself a most agreeable companion.

The company was soon strengthened by the arrival of some new performers, and whilst Wilhelm and Serlo were busy in their several departments, the former insisting on the general spirit and expression of the whole, the latter, upon the faithful representation of the various parts, a praiseworthy zeal animated the performers, and the public took a lively interest in their success.

"We are now in the right path," observed Serlo upon one occasion, "let us continue our course and the public will soon join us. It is an easy matter to mislead them by wild and extravagant displays, but they are zealous admirers of whatever is rational and refined.

"The principal defect in our theatre, and which affects both the actor and the spectator, consists in the variety of its objects, and in the want of a proper support to sustain our judgment. It does not seem to me to be any advantage that we have enlarged our theatre, till it has become a boundless arena for the display of nature, and yet neither manager nor actor ought to limit its range until the taste of the nation shall indicate the proper boundaries. Every good society exists under certain restraints, and this must be the case with every good theatre. Particular manners and forms of expression, certain objects and courses of conduct must be unequivocally abandoned. No one becomes poorer by contracting his household expenses."

Our friends agreed or differed more or less upon these subjects. Wilhelm, and the majority of the actors, advocated the English system. Serlo, and some others, defended the French theatrical arrangements.

They had determined, during some of their leisure hours, of which an actor unfortunately has too many, to peruse together the most celebrated plays in the French and English languages, and to mark particularly those passages which seemed to be most excellent and most worthy of imitation. They accordingly commenced with some French productions, but Aurelia invariably disappeared when the reading commenced. At first it was thought that she was unwell, but Wilhelm upon one occasion questioned her upon the subject.

"I will not consent to be present at those readings," she observed, "for how could I pay attention and exercise my judgment when my heart is broken? I hate the French language beyond measure."

"How can you dislike a language," inquired Wilhelm, "to which we owe the greater part of our accomplishments, and to which we must become even still more indebted before our nature is rendered perfect?"

"I am not prejudiced," continued Aurelia, "but a sad

impression, a detested recollection of my faithless friend, has destroyed all my powers of enjoying this beautiful and refined language. I hate it from the bottom of my heart! During the existence of our affectionate intercourse, he always corresponded with me in German, in cordial, sincere, and vigorous German, but when he wished to abandon me, then he began to write in French, as he had done several times previously for amusement. I felt, I understood what he meant. All that he would have blushed to say in his native tongue, he could now write with a safe conscience. It is a language well adapted for reservations, equivocations, and lies; it is a perfidious language! Thank Heaven, I can find no German word to express the meaning of '*perfide*' in all its force. Our poor expression '*treulos*' is an innocent babe in comparison with it. '*Perfide*' is '*treulos*' with delight, with insolence, and malice. Well may we envy the refinement of a nation which can express so many shades of meaning with a single word. French is, indeed the language of the world, worthy of becoming the universal language, that we may learn how to cheat and to betray each other! It is true his French letters always read pleasantly enough! To the fancy they sounded warmly and even passionately, but when closely examined they were nothing but phrases, unmeaning phrases. He has spoiled all my taste for the language, for the whole range of French literature, even for the most choice and beautiful sentiments of the noblest souls when uttered in that tongue. I shudder when I hear a French word."

Thus would she for whole hours continue to express her vexation, and interrupt every other species of conversation. Serlo generally silenced her peevish complaints by some bitter observation, but the amusement of the evening was by this means generally disturbed.

It seldom happens that objects which are to be accomplished by the united exertions of men and circumstances combined, long continue perfect. This applies as fully to a theatre, as to a kingdom, and you may generally find in a circle of friends, as well as in an army, that there is a precise moment, when all things may be said to have attained the highest degree of perfection, harmony, and activity. But before long, individuals change, new persons appear upon the scene, some no longer suit existing circumstances, or existing

circumstances no longer suit them, a general alteration ensues, and the previous union becomes dissolved. Thus, a short time ago, it might have been truly said that Serlo's company was as complete as a German company could possibly be. The majority of the actors filled their proper places, all were fully occupied, and they all entered zealously into their respective duties. Their personal circumstances were prosperous, their profession held out prospects of success, for they all played with energy and animation. But it soon appeared that some of them were automatons, who could only succeed in parts where feeling was not required. Moreover those personal antipathies soon appeared amongst them, which so frequently ruin every arrangement, and destroy that harmony which reasonable men are so anxious to see preserved.

Philina's departure was of more importance than was at first apprehended. She had always displayed a great degree of cleverness in amusing Serlo, and in entertainiug the rest of her companions. She had borne Aurelia's violence patiently, but her most favourite employment was to flatter Wilhelm. Thus she had been the means of keeping the whole company united, and her loss was therefore sensibly felt.

Serlo could not live without carrying on some little love intrigue. Elmira's person had improved considerably of late: she was now considered beautiful. She had long since attracted Serlo's attention, and Philina had been clever enough to encourage his passion, as soon as she had observed its existence. Serlo and Elmira soon became acquainted with each other, and after Philina's departure a close intimacy commenced between them, and the little romance in which they soon engaged, proved the more interesting, as they found it necessary to conceal it carefully from the girl's father, who would not have endured conduct of a suspicious nature. Elmira's sister had been entrusted with the secret, and Serlo was on this account obliged to overlook many irregularities in both of them. One of her greatest faults was an immoderate indulgence in eating, which indeed amounted to actual gluttony, and in this respect, she differed altogether from Philina, who had possessed a peculiar charm from her appearing to subsist on air. She ate but sparingly,

and seldom drank more than the foaming cream of a glass of champagne, which she sipped with the most exquisite grace imaginable.

Now, however, in order to please his favourites, Serlo was obliged to connect the breakfast with the dinner, to which, moreover, the supper was united by means of a late luncheon. He had moreover formed a plan, the accomplishment of which gave him the greatest trouble. He thought he had discovered a sort of attachment to exist between Wilhelm and Aurelia, and he was above all things anxious that it should assume a serious form. He hoped by this means to throw the entire burden of his theatrical establishment upon Wilhelm, expecting to find in him, as in his former brother-in-law, an honest and industrious coadjutor. He had already by degrees engaged him in all the cares of the management; Aurelia took care of the money, and Serlo once more led a free and easy life, as he had done in former times. Yet there was one circumstance, which gave both him and his sister much secret annoyance.

The public has a peculiar mode of acting towards men of acknowledged talent. It generally treats them with indifference, and favours persons of less merit and of more moderate endowments. It makes excessive demands upon the former, and is content with almost anything from the latter.

Serlo and Aurelia had sufficient cause to make their own reflections upon this peculiarity. The new actors, especially those who were young and handsome, gained all the attention of the public, and the others, notwithstanding their utmost exertions, were generally obliged to retire without receiving a welcome tribute of applause. This, however, arose from certain especial causes. Aurelia's pride was manifest, and her contempt for the public was generally known. It is true that Serlo flattered every one in turn, but his satirical observations were frequently circulated and repeated. The new actors, on the other hand, were either strangers and wholly unknown to the public, or were young, amiable, and in want of assistance, and for those reasons they found abundance of patrons.

Ere long, feelings of discontent and dissatisfaction were observable amongst the company, and they no sooner saw

that Wilhelm had undertaken the task of manager, than most of the actors grew inattentive and remiss, notwithstanding that he strove earnestly to introduce order and economy amongst them, and particularly insisted that all mechanical duties should be performed with punctuality and precision.

In a short time, the whole establishment, which seemed lately to have attained an ideal perfection, became as thoroughly vulgar as the most ordinary strolling company, and unfortunately when Wilhelm, by his diligence, attention, and exertions, had completely comprehended the demands of his profession, and had perfectly trained his person and his habits in conformity therewith, he began to think, in moments of sadness, that this branch of the art did not deserve so large an expenditure of his time and talents as he had devoted to it. His duties were irksome and his remuneration was insufficient. He would have preferred some other pursuit in which, after his toils were ended, he might enjoy repose of mind, to an employment in which, after the most excessive mechanical labour, his end could not be attained without the most strenuous efforts both of thought and feeling. Moreover, he had to endure the complaints of Aurelia with respect to her brother's extravagance, and to misunderstand, as it were, the artifices of Serlo in his attempts to bring about a marriage between himself and his sister. He had also to conceal the sorrow which so deeply afflicted him, at the continued absence of the messenger, whom he had sent in quest of the ambiguous officer, and from whom no tidings had arrived. Wilhelm was filled with apprehension lest he might lose his Mariana for the second time.

Just at this time a public mourning was announced, which caused the theatre to be closed for several weeks. Wilhelm availed himself of this opportunity for visiting the clergyman, who had taken charge of the old Harper. He resided in a pleasant neighbourhood: and the first object which met Wilhelm's eye, upon his arrival, was his aged friend, employed in giving lessons to a boy upon his instrument. The Harper evinced great joy at seeing Wilhelm; he rose from his seat, and holding out his hand, observed, "You see that I can even still be of some use in the world, but allow me to continue my labours, for my whole time is engaged."

The clergyman received Wilhelm cordially, informing him that his patient was progressing very favourably, and gave hopes of a complete recovery.

The conversation turned naturally upon the different methods employed for the cure of insane persons.

"I find the means of restoring the insane to reason very simple," said the clergyman, "except in those cases where physical causes place insuperable difficulties in the way, upon which occasions I always have recourse to the advice of an experienced physician. They are precisely the means by which a sane person is prevented from becoming deranged. Excite their personal activity, accustom them to order, shew them that their own existence and fate is the common lot of millions of their fellow creatures, that extraordinary talents, the greatest prosperity and the deepest misery are but slight variations from the general lot of man, and then no mental derangement will make its appearance, or if it should, will gradually disappear. I have apportioned out the old man's time, he instructs a few children upon the harp, he assists the workmen in the garden, he has already become much more cheerful. He likes to taste the vegetables which he has himself planted, and as he has bequeathed his harp to my son after his own decease, he is anxious to instruct him carefully, in order that the youth may be able to enjoy his legacy. I have not interfered in my character of clergyman with his mysterious scruples, but a life of occupation occasions so many incidents, that he will soon feel how quickly every kind of doubt will give way to activity. I go quietly to work—and if I can only induce him to get rid of his beard and his hood, I shall have achieved wonders. Nothing more disposes us to madness than affecting singularity, and nothing assists more to preserve our common sense, than a life spent in the ordinary manner, amidst general society. But, in truth, there are many things in our system of education, and in our civic institutions, to predispose us and our children to mental derangement."

Wilhelm spent several days in the society of this intelligent man, and learned some interesting particulars, not only of men who are actually deranged, but of others who are

considered, not merely rational, but wise men, and yet are possessed of peculiarities which closely resemble insanity.

Upon the entrance of the doctor, the conversation became trebly interesting. He was in the habit frequently of visiting his friend, the clergyman, and of aiding him in his humane exertions. He was somewhat advanced in years, infirm in health, and had passed a great portion of his life in the exercise of the noblest virtues. He was an ardent lover of a country life, and could hardly exist except in the open air; at the same time he was active, and fond of society, and he had for many years evinced an anxiety to form an intimacy with all the country clergymen who would receive his visits. He endeavoured to assist all those who were engaged in any useful occupation, and to encourage a taste for active pursuits, in those who were unemployed. His acquaintance was considerable with the nobility, the judges, and the public officials; and he had, during a period of twenty years, secretly encouraged many branches of agriculture, and had done much to improve the breed of animals, and the education of men, thus promoting the public good in the very truest sense. He was accustomed to say, that the greatest misfortune which could happen to man, was his becoming the victim of some idea, which rendered him inactive, and withdrew him from the pursuits of a busy life. "I have, at this very time," he said, "a case before me, and hitherto my treatment has not proved successful. Your advice, my worthy Pastor, may prove of service, and your young companion here will not mention the circumstance again.

"During the absence of a distinguished personage, some persons, in a frolic of which we cannot approve, dressed up a young man in the clothes of the master of the house. The object was to impose upon his wife, and though the circumstance has been told to me as a jest, I fear that it was done with the intention of leading the noble and amiable lady astray. Her husband returned unexpectedly, proceeded to his own apartment, and conceiving that he had witnessed his own apparition, fell into a state of melancholy, under the conviction that his death was near. He now gives himself up to the society of men, who encourage his religious feelings; and I fear, that both he and his wife will join the

Herrnhuters, and deprive their children and relations of the greater part of their fortune."

"His wife!" exclaimed Wilhelm in the greatest excitement, as he had been more than a little alarmed at the story.

"And, alas!" continued the physician, who mistook Wilhelm's exclamation for a mere expression of humane sympathy, "the lady is herself the victim of a deeper sorrow, which makes her wish to retire from the world. The young man, whom I have mentioned, was bidding her farewell, and she was not sufficiently prudent to conceal an incipient affection which she entertained for him. He grew bold, clasped her in his arms, and pressed a large portrait of her husband, which was set in diamonds, forcibly against her bosom. She felt a pain at the time, which, however, soon disappeared; a little redness was at first perceptible in the spot, but finally no mark whatever remained. I am convinced, as a man, that she has no cause for reproach; and I am certain, as a physician, that the slight wound can have no evil effect; but it is impossible to persuade her, that a hardening of the part will not ensue; and if you try to convince her of her error by appealing to her sensations, she will answer that she is only free from temporary pain, and is certain that the disease will end in cancer, and so her youth and personal charms are entirely lost both to herself and others."

"Unfortunate being that I am!" cried Wilhelm, striking his forehead, and suddenly rushing from the company. He never felt himself in such a desperate condition.

The clergyman and the physician were astonished beyond measure at this strange discovery; and they had much trouble with him when he returned in the evening, and circumstantially confessing the whole occurrence, accused himself in the most unequivocal manner. His friends felt the warmest interest in his sufferings, particularly as his depressed state of mind caused him to paint the circumstance in the darkest colours.

On the following day the physician did not need much persuasion to accompany him to the town, both for the sake of his society, and that he might, if possible, assist Aurelia, whom our friend had left in a somewhat serious condition. Thy found her rather worse than they had expected. She

suffered from an attack of intermittent fever, which was more difficult to treat, as she herself intentionally encouraged and stimulated its attacks. The stranger was not announced as a physician, and he displayed much courtesy and prudence. They conversed together about the state of her mind and body, and the stranger related many anecdotes of persons, who, in spite of similar attacks, had attained a good old age, but he observed that nothing was more injurious in such cases than an intentional renewal of passionate excitement. In particular he considered it very fortunate, when, in diseases which were not easily cured, the patient entertained genuine feelings of religion. He stated this in an indifferent manner, as it were incidentally, and promised his new friend the perusal of an interesting manuscript, which he had lately received from the hands of an excellent lady, who was since deceased. "It is to me of inestimable value," he remarked, "but I will entrust you with the original. The title alone is written by me. I have named it *The Confessions of a fair Saint.*"

With regard to the medical treatment of the unhappy and excited Aurelia, the physician gave Wilhelm the best advice, promised to write to him, and, if possible, to return. In the mean time, during Wilhelm's absence, a very unexpected change had taken place. During his management of the theatre, he had conducted the establishment with great freedom and liberality, considering chiefly the ultimate result, and he had always provided the dresses, the decorations, and every other material, in the most plentiful and abundant manner, and for the purpose of winning the good-will of the actors, he had always flattered their self-interests, as they could not be influenced by any nobler motives. He was the more justified in this course, because Serlo himself made no pretensions to being a good economist; he was more anxious about the brilliancy of his theatre, and was quite satisfied if Aurelia, who conducted the whole establishment, assured him that she was free from debt, and could spare what was necessary to defray the expenses which Serlo incurred by his extraordinary liberality to his favorites.

Melina, who had undertaken the management of the wardrobe, had thought over all these things in silence in his own cold and selfish spirit, and upon Wilhelm's departure and

during the increasing illness of Aurelia, he suggested to Serlo, that it was possible to save more, and to spend less, and consequently to lay by something, or else to lead a life of still greater dissipation. Serlo listened with pleasure, and Melina proceeded to unfold his plans.

"I do not mean to say," he observed, "that any of the actors are at present too extravagantly paid. They are meritorious people, and would be well received any where; but, nevertheless they are paid too much, considering our receipts. My advice would be to establish an opera, and as for the theatre, I must say that you are the very man to carry out such an undertaking without assistance. Do you not observe how your merits are at present neglected? And it is not because your fellow-actors are excellent, but only good, that you do not receive full justice. Appear upon the boards alone, as you used to do formerly, engage middling, or even inferior actors at small salaries, amuse the public, as you are so competent to do, with mechanical exhibitions, devote yourself to the opera, and you will find that with the same labour and expense you will give greater satisfaction, and obtain infinitely more money than you have hitherto done."

Serlo was too highly flattered not to feel the full force of these arguments. He acknowledged to Melina that his love for music had for a long time made him anxious for such an arrangement, but he thought that the public taste would thus become seriously vitiated, and that with a theatre of the proposed description, which would neither be an opera nor a playhouse, any remains of proper feeling for regular and perfect works of art would quickly disappear.

Melina ridiculed, in rather coarse terms, Wilhelm's pedantic ideas upon this subject, as well as his expectations of leading the public taste, in place of being guided by it, and both he and Serlo at length agreed that their sole object should be to make money, to become rich, and to enjoy a luxurious life, and they made no secret of their wish to get rid of every person who seemed likely to oppose their plan. Melina affected to lament the delicate state of Aurelia's health, which, he said, threatened a fatal termination, though he really thought the contrary. Serlo regretted that Wilhelm was not a singer, thus intimating that his engagement

with the company was not absolutely indispensable. Melina now produced a long list of intended savings, and Serlo beheld in him a vision of his brother-in-law three times restored. They both felt the necessity of keeping their intentions quite secret, but this obligation only served to unite them more closely together—they, therefore, conversed in private upon everything that occurred, found fault with all the projects of Aurelia and Wilhelm, and proceeded in their endeavors to bring their own plans to perfection.

But though they were silent with respect to their views, and never allowed their words to betray them, they were not always polite enough in their conduct, wholly to conceal their intentions. Melina, for instance, frequently opposed Wilhelm, in matters which lay especially within the province of the latter, and Serlo, who had never been very kind towards his sister, became now more harsh in his conduct, in proportion as her illness increased, and as her uncertain and excitable disposition seemed to require his indulgence.

Just at this time they gave a representation of Amelia Galotti. The characters were very well distributed, and within the confined circle of this tragedy, the whole company could display their various powers of acting. Serlo was at home in the part of Marinelli, Madame Melina played the mother with great judgment, Elmira received much applause as Amelia, Laertes was a dignified Appiani, and Wilhelm had devoted several months to the study of the Prince's character. Upon this occasion, he often discussed the following point, not only with himself, but with Serlo and Aurelia, "What is the difference between a noble and a well-bred manner, and how far must the former necessarily be included in the latter, though the latter need not be included in the former?"

Serlo, who, in the part of Marinelli, had to perform the perfect courtier wholly free from caricature, expressed himself very happily upon this subject. "A well-bred manner," he said, "is difficult to imitate, because its qualities are negative, and it requires a long continued training. It is not necessary, for instance, that your conduct should display a show of dignity, for then haughtiness of deportment and formality will probably be the consequence, but you must avoid all that is undignified and vulgar. You must never

forget yourself, you must pay strict attention to yourself and others, overlook no fault in your own conduct, and exact from others neither too much nor too little. Nothing must be allowed to agitate or to disturb you, nothing to surprise you. You must keep yourself perfectly collected, and preserve an outward calm, whatever storms may rage within. A person of noble character may sometimes yield to his emotions—the well-bred man can never do so. The latter resembles a person attired in the neatest apparel—he may not lean against any support, or allow another to touch him. Though he separates himself from others, he may not stand alone, and it happens in this art as in every other, that the greatest difficulties are at length accomplished with ease. The well-bred man, in spite of his real isolation, always appears to form one of the society around him; he is never stiff but always complaisant; he should always be recognized as the first, yet never insist upon the recognition of his claims.

"It is evident, therefore, that in order to seem well-bred, one must really be so. And we may clearly see why it is that women can generally assume the airs of high breeding more successfully than men, and why courtiers and officers can so easily attain to that distinction."

Wilhelm now almost despaired of his capabilities to perform the part, but Serlo proved of great assistance to him, making the wisest observations on particular passages, and instructing him so fully, that upon the performance of the play, he passed for a highly respectable prince in the opinion of the public.

Serlo had promised, that after the play was ended, he would offer such observations upon it as might suggest themselves to him, but an unfortunate disagreement between himself and his sister prevented the communication of his criticisms. Aurelia had acted the character of Orsina in a very unusual style. She was well acquainted with the part; and had, therefore, been negligent at the rehearsals, but during the performance she displayed all the deep sources of her personal sorrow, and thus produced a representation such as no poet in the earliest glow of inspiration could have anticipated. The rapturous applause of the public rewarded her painful exertions, but at the conclusion of the piece, she

was obliged to seek repose upon a sofa in a half-insensible state.

Serlo had already expressed his dissatisfaction at her exaggerated acting, as he termed it, and at her display of the secret feelings of her heart, as the public were more or less acquainted with her unfortunate history. He had displayed his anger according to his usual custom, by frowning and stamping with his feet.

"Let her have her own way," he exclaimed, when he saw her reclining upon the sofa, surrounded by the other actors, "before long she will go upon the stage perfectly naked, and then the applause will be unbounded."

On the following morning she enjoyed a quiet hour. She sent for Wilhelm and handed him a letter.

"This sheet," she said, "has long been prepared for the present moment. I feel that the end of my life is approaching, promise, then, that you will keep this paper, and that by a few words you will avenge my death upon the faithless object of my attachment. He is not devoid of feeling, and my death will afflict him for a time."

Wilhelm took the letter, endeavouring at the same time to comfort her, and to lead her mind from dwelling upon the thoughts of death.

"No!" she said, "do not deprive me of my dearest hope, I have long waited for his appearance, and I will embrace him gladly when he comes."

Shortly after this, the manuscript arrived, which had been promised to her by the doctor. She sent for Wilhelm, that he might read it to her, and the effect which it produced will be better understood, when the reader has perused the next book of our narrative. The wayward and violent temper of Aurelia was at once softened by the perusal. She took back her letter, and wrote another in a milder tone, and she begged Wilhelm to console her friend, if he should be afflicted at the news of her death, to assure him that she had forgiven everything, and that she wished him the most perfect happiness.

From this time, she became more quiet; her attention being absorbed by a few ideas, which she sought to appropriate to herself from the manuscript, which Wilhelm continued to read occasionally for her amusement. The decay

of her strength was imperceptible ; and, one morning when Wilhelm went to visit her, he found her unexpectedly dead.

The respect which he had entertained for her, and his long-habitual enjoyment of her society, caused him to feel her loss very sensibly. She was the only person who really cared for him, and he bitterly felt the coldness which Serlo had for some time exhibited towards him. He exerted himself, therefore, to discharge the commission with which she had entrusted him, and he was anxious to absent himself for a time. The journey which he contemplated was highly gratifying to Melina. The latter had, in the course of his extensive correspondence, lately engaged two opera singers, and he intended that their performance at interludes, should prepare the public for his future opera.

The loss of Aurelia and the absence of Wilhelm were to be supplied by this means ; and Wilhelm was satisfied with any arrangement that should facilitate his absence for several weeks.

He entertained a singular idea of the great importance of his duty. The death of Aurelia had affected him deeply, and as he had seen her depart so early from this transitory scene, he could not help feeling exasperated against a man, who had not only shortened her life, but had embittered the brief term of her existence.

In spite of the last kind and forgiving words of the dying Aurelia, he determined upon delivering his letter, to pronounce a severe judgment on her faithless friend, and, as he did not wish to depend upon the accidental impressions of the moment, he prepared a speech which during its composition became highly pathetic in its tone. When he was quite satisfied with the style of his essay, and during the time that he was committing it to memory, he made preparations for his departure. Mignon was present at the packing up of his wardrobe, and she inquired whether he was about to travel towards the south or towards the north, and when he answered in the latter direction, she replied, that, in that case, she would rather wait till he should return. She begged that he would give her the pearl necklace, which had belonged to Mariana, a request which he could not refuse. He had already given her the neckhandkerchief. She, on her

side, placed the veil of the ghost in his travelling-bag, although he assured her that it would be wholly useless to him.

Melina now undertook the directorship; his wife promised to watch the children with a mother's eye, and Wilhelm bade her adieu with great sorrow. Felix was in good spirits at the moment of his departure, and when he was asked what present he wished that Wilhelm should bring him upon his return, he cried, "Listen, bring me a papa." Mignon seized Wilhelm's hand, and standing upon her tip-toes, she pressed it to her lips, with a warm and cordial kiss, in which, however, there was no touch of tenderness, exclaiming, at the same time, "Master! do not forget us, and return soon."

And now, leaving Wilhelm to pursue his journey, amid a thousand conflicting thoughts and emotions, we will here subjoin, by way of conclusion, a little poem which Mignon had several times recited with great feeling, and to which the pressure of so many extraordinary events has hitherto prevented us from directing the attention of our readers.

O, do not bid me speak, I pray,
For silence is my duty now;
I could my inmost soul display,
But fate may not such deed allow.

The morning sunbeams rise in strength,
Their gladdening rays o'er night to fling—
And hardest rocks reveal at length
To earth some sweet refreshing spring.

In friendship's arms while some repose,
And all their sorrows freely speak,
A solemn oath my lips doth close,
Which God alone can bid me break.

BOOK VI.

Confessions of a fair Saint.

Until I had reached my eighth year, I was a healthy child, but I can remember no more of the intervening period than of the day of my birth. At the commencement of my eighth year, I suffered from a serious illness, and from that time all the powers of my soul became absorbed in feeling and in memory. The most trifling circumstances connected with that event, are now before my eyes as vividly as if they had happened only yesterday.

During the nine months of my tedious confinement to bed, (a misfortune which I endured with great patience), the foundation of my whole tone of thought was laid, for my mind then found the first opportunity of developing itself.

I suffered and I loved—this was the peculiar property of my heart. During the most violent fits of coughing and of wasting fever, I lay as still as a snail would do within its shell, but the instant that I obtained relief, I panted for some enjoyment, and as every other gratification was forbidden, I sought innocently to entertain my ears and my eyes. I was plentifully supplied with dolls and pictures, and whoever came to my bed side was obliged to amuse me with an anecdote.

I was charmed with my mother's relation of the Bible histories, and my father entertained me with a display of natural curiosities. He possessed a very choice museum, from which he exhibited to me the several compartments in succession, pointing out the various contents and explaining their different properties. Dried plants, insects, and anatomical preparations of human skin, bones, mummies, and so forth, were in turn laid out upon the bed of the little invalid, and the birds and animals which had been obtained in field

sports, were always shown to me before they were taken to the kitchen. And in order that the prince of the world might not be wholly excluded, my aunt frequently amused me with a relation of love stories and fairy tales. Everything was received by me and took root in my imagination. There were hours in which I held intimate communication with the unseen Being. I still remember some verses which my mother wrote down at the time, from my dictation.

I frequently recapitulated to my father the information which I had acquired from him. I seldom took a medicinal preparation, without asking where the several materials had grown, of which it was composed, and without inquiring into their various properties, and asking their names. It was soon evident that the anecdotes recounted by my aunt had not fallen upon dry ground. I sometimes fancied myself attired in fine clothes, and hastening to meet the most handsome princes, who were unable to find either rest or repose till they had ascertained who the unknown beauty was. A similar adventure with a charming little angel, who courted me, attired in a white dress and golden wings, took such firm hold of my imagination, that his form was almost visible.

At the expiration of a year, I was nearly restored to health, but I had lost all the giddiness of youth. Dolls no longer afforded me any pleasure, I panted for some living thing which should be capable of returning my love. Dogs, cats, and birds, of which my father had a large collection, afforded me extreme delight, but what would I not now have given, to possess one of those creatures which used to play so important a part in the stories of my aunt? I mean a lamb, which had been found by a peasant girl and nourished in a wood, but under the appearance of this innocent animal an enchanted prince had lain concealed, until at length he assumed his real shape and rewarded his benefactress with his hand. How would I have been delighted with the possession of such a lamb!

But no such happiness was in store for me, and as the whole course of events seemed quite natural and commonplace, I gradually abandoned all hope of meeting such a precious treasure. In the mean time, however, I found comfort in books which contained an account of the most wonderful adventures. My favourite work was the "*Chris-*

tian German Hercules," that pious love story was quite after my heart. The hero of the tale, when any thing happened to his Valiska (and dreadful events were constantly occurring), was always accustomed to pray, before he hastened to her assistance, and the prayers were given at full length in the book. How highly did that delight me! My love for the Invisible which I had always felt in a mysterious manner, was by this means increased, for God was henceforth always to be my confidant.

My reading became more desultory as I grew older, but I valued the "*Roman Octavia*," beyond every other work. The persecutions of the first Christians, which were related in the style of a romance, excited the warmest interest in my mind.

My mother at length began to complain of my continual reading, and my father, in order to gratify her wishes, deprived me of my books, but never failed to restore them to me on the following day. My mother was clever enough to perceive that she could not thus attain the object which she had in view, and therefore she sought to impress upon me, the necessity of reading my Bible, with the same attention which I bestowed upon other works. I needed no compulsion to obey, and I perused the holy Scriptures with the greatest interest. My mother was at all times careful that no bad books should fall into my hands, immoral writings I should instantly have rejected of my own accord, for my princes and princesses were all remarkable for their love of virtue.

I had to thank my mother, as well as my own love of learning, for my acquaintance with the art of cookery, without applying to books for information. Much was to be learnt from observation. I took great delight in cutting up a fowl or any other animal. I would then show the different parts to my father, who discoursed to me about them, as he would have done with a young student of anatomy, and with real but silent joy, he would call me his strangely dispositioned child.

I was now in my thirteenth year. I had learnt French, dancing and drawing, and had received the customary instruction in religion. This latter study awakened my feelings and my thoughts, but I found nothing in it which

properly affected my own condition. I was pleased to hear God spoken of, and I was proud that I could converse about him better than my equals. I read many books which enabled me to talk about religion, but it never occurred to me to reflect upon my own situation, to ask whether my soul was trained according to the required standard, whether it resembled a mirror which reflected back the rays of the eternal Sun—all this I had taken for granted.

I learnt French with much eagerness. My master was a clever man. He was no thoughtless empiric, no dry grammarian, he possessed much knowledge and had seen the world. Whilst teaching me the language, he satisfied my anxiety for information in a thousand ways. I loved him so much, that I always expected his arrival with a palpitating heart. I did not find drawing difficult, and I should have made much more decided progress therein, if my master had possessed a head and more science, as it was, he possessed only hands and practice.

Dancing at first afforded me the smallest amount of amusement. My constitution was too delicate, and I took lessons only in the society of my sister. But our master soon adopted the plan of inviting his pupils of both sexes to a ball, and the pleasures of dancing were by this means wonderfully increased.

Amongst the crowd of youths and maidens who were present, two sons of the Marshal of the Court were particularly remarkable. The younger was of my own age, and the other was two years my senior, they were both of surpassing beauty, and it was universally admitted that no one had ever seen their equals. Scarcely had I observed them, than I ceased to notice any other person, from that moment I paid attention to my steps, and became anxious to dance well. How did it happen that, on their parts, these two youths also distinguished me from all my companions? But enough—in an hour we had become the very best friends, and before the little entertainment had concluded, we had arranged where and when our next interview was to take place. Imagine my delight! But I was positively enraptured, when on the following day, they both inquired for me in a polite note, accompanied by a bouquet. I have never since felt the sensations which I then experienced.

Compliments were then mutually paid, and a constant interchange of letters took place. The church and the public promenades were henceforth converted into places of rendezvous, and all our young friends invited us together upon every occasion, though we were prudent enough to conceal our attachment so carefully, that our parents observed no more of it than we judged advisable.

I had now won two lovers, although I had as yet formed no decision in favour of either, in point of fact they both pleased me, and we were on the best of terms together. Suddenly the elder brother became unwell, and as I myself had frequently been ill, I had acquired some experience of the dainties which were suited to an invalid, and I was thus enabled to contribute to his comfort. His parents were grateful for my attention, and they soon acceded to the request of their dear son, and invited me and my sister to visit him, when he had risen from his bed. The affection with which he received me, was not the feeling of a child, and from that day I decided in his favour. At the same time he warned me to hide our secret from his brother, but our love could not be concealed, and the jealousy of the younger one rendered our romance complete. He played us a thousand tricks, he strove to ruin our happiness, and by that means only increased those feelings of love which he sought to annihilate.

I had now at length found my long wished for lamb, and the passion which I indulged affected me like an illness, rendering me calm and withdrawing me from all noisy pleasures. I loved solitude—I felt deeply agitated and thoughts of God again took possession of my mind. He was once more my confidant, and well do I remember the tears with which I used to pray for the dear youth, whose recovery was not yet complete.

The thorough innocence of this proceeding contributed extremely to the formation of my heart. In compliance with the directions of our French master, we now exchanged our customary translations, for letters of our own composition. I gave an account of my love adventure, under the convenient names of Phyllis and Damon. The old man saw through the disguise, and in order to render me communicative, he highly praised the execution of my task. I became bolder,

spoke out more freely, and actually carried some truth into my details. I do not now remember the passage, which caused him upon one occasion to observe, "How pretty, how natural all this is! But the good Phyllis must beware, or it may become serious!"

I felt distressed that he did not consider the affair as serious already, and I asked him in a tone of dissatisfaction, what he meant by serious? It was not necessary to repeat my inquiry, for he at once explained himself so clearly, that I was unable to conceal my alarm. But a feeling of anger soon succeeded, and I was indignant that he should entertain such thoughts, but willing to defend my imaginary maiden, I answered, with blushing cheeks, "But, my good Sir! Phyllis is an honorable girl!"

He was wicked enough to jest with me about my honorable heroine, and as our conversatiou was carried on in French, he played upon the meaning of the word "*honnête*," and pursued the honour of Phyllis through all its significations. I felt the absurdity of this, and was beyond measure perplexed. But he, unwilling to alarm me too much, broke off for a time, though he returned to the subject upon many subsequent occasions. Plays and little romances, which I read and translated for him, afforded him frequent opportunities of demonstrating how weak is the protection of our boasted virtue against the solicitations of love. I ceased to contradict him, though I was secretly offended and I felt his observations to be distressing.

But my communications with Damon were soon brought to a close. The chicanery of the younger brother had destroyed our intercourse, and a short time afterwards these promising youths died. I was sorry for a time, but both of them were soon forgotten.

Phyllis now grew rapidly—she was in the bloom of youth and health, and anxious to see the world. The hereditary Prince married about this time, and soon afterwards, upon the decease of his father, he commenced his reign. The court and town were alive with excitement, and my feelings of curiosity were gratified to the fullest extent. There was an abundance of plays and balls with their usual accompaniments, and though my parents were anxious for retirement, they were obliged to appear at court, where my introduction

accordingly took place. Strangers flocked to the palace in crowds, entertainments were given in every house, many dashing cavaliers were introduced and recommended to me; and at my uncle's house, I may say that there was an actual congregation of nations.

My trustworthy Mentor continued his warnings in a delicate but decided tone, and in my secret heart I was not displeased at his interference. But I was by no means convinced of the truth of his assertion, "that women are under all circumstances weak;" he might have been right or wrong in his opinion, but his tone became so earnest that I grew alarmed and observed to him upon one occasion, in a tone of seriousness, "if the danger is so great, and the human heart so weak, I will implore of God to preserve me."

This simple observation appeared to please him, he praised my resolution, though I had then no actual intention of fulfilling it. They were but empty words—for in point of fact every feeling of reverence for the Invisible was at that time well nigh extinguished within me. The scenes of dissipation in which I was perpetually engaged perplexed and confounded me, and bore me along in an irresistible torrent. This was the most unprofitable portion of my existence. For whole days I abstained from instructive conversation, I avoided all useful thoughts and devoted myself to the merest dissipation. Never for a moment did I think of my beloved books. The people by whom I was surrounded had not the slightest acquaintance with literature. They were a class of German courtiers, and at that period such people were destitute of every species of mental culture.

One would have thought that society of this kind must have led me to the brink of ruin. I passed an existence of mere corporal cheerfulness; I never examined myself, I never prayed, I never even thought of my own condition, or of God. Yet I must thank Heaven that I was not captivated by any of the handsome, rich, and well dressed men by whom I was surrounded; they were dissipated in their conduct, and made no secret of their vices, this terrified me. Their conversation was obscene and painful, on which account I became reserved in my intercourse with them—

occasionally their improprieties surpassed belief, and then I could not avoid behaving rudely to them.

In addition, my experienced adviser had upon one occasion informed me in confidence, that with the greater part of the gentry, not only virtue but health itself was in danger. I became afraid of them from that moment, and I trembled if one of them approached me. I avoided henceforth all the glasses and drinking cups, and even the very chairs which they had touched. Thus, both in a moral and physical sense, I became wholly separated from them, and I satisfied myself with haughtily receiving as my right, all the compliments which they bestowed upon me.

Among the strangers who at this time resided with us, one young man was particularly distinguished, whom, in jest, we named Narcissus. He had acquired some fame in the diplomatic circles, and amongst the many changes which were then occurring at court, he hoped to obtain some lucrative employment. He soon became acquainted with my father, and his acquirements and elegant manner immediately ensured his admission to the most select and accomplished circles. My father was constant in his praises, and his handsome figure would have produced a still greater impression, if he had not been so thoroughly imbued with conceit. I had already seen him and he had won my good opinion, but we had never conversed together.

We met upon one occasion at a large ball, where we danced a minuet together, but our acquaintance did not thereby become more intimate. I was accustomed to avoid the more violent dances, in deference to my father's wishes, as he felt so much anxiety about my health, and during one of these, I had retired to an adjoining apartment, where I found amusement in conversing with some of my older companions, who were engaged at cards.

Narcissus being fatigued with dancing, entered the apartment to recover himself a little, and he soon fell into general conversation with me. Before half an hour had elapsed, we were so agreeably entertained, that we could not think of returning to the ball room, and though our friends jested with us upon the circumstance, we were not turned from our agreeable occupation. On the following

evening we met again, and our pleasant conversation was resumed.

A perfect acquaintance was now established between us. Narcissus paid constant visits to me, and to my sisters, and from that time I began to inquire into the extent of my knowledge, to examine into my feelings and sensations, and to improve my powers of conversation. My new friend, who had always moved in the best society, in addition to his historical and political acquirements, which were perfect, possessed very extensive literary knowledge, and he was a stranger to nothing that issued from the press, especially in France. It was his habit to bring or send me many a delightful book, but this we kept as profound a secret as we should have done forbidden love. Learned women were at that time considered ridiculous, and even well instructed ladies were scarcely tolerated, probably because it was deemed impolite to put so many ignorant men to the blush. Even my father, who was quite delighted with this new opportunity of cultivating my mind, expressly insisted that our literary intercourse should not be divulged.

Our intimacy had now lasted for a whole year, and I cannot say that Narcissus had ever even indirectly expressed the least love or tenderness for me. His conduct was invariably kind and complaisant, but wholly devoid of affection; indeed he seemed to be rather attracted by the charms of my younger sister, who was then extremely beautiful. In jest he gave her many friendly foreign names, for he spoke several languages fluently, and he frequently introduced foreign expressions into his conversation. She did not return his civilities with any cordiality, as her thoughts were otherwise engaged, and as she was of rather a wayward disposition and he was particularly sensitive, they were constantly quarrelling about trifles. He agreed very well with my mother and aunts, and thus he gradually became a member of the family.

Who can say how long we might have continued to live in this manner, if a singular accident had not all at once occurred. In company with my sisters I had received an invitation from a certain family, which I was very reluctant to accept. The society was not select, and the house was often frequented by rude and uneducated persons. On the present occasion, Narcissus was invited

to accompany us, and I was inclined to go on his account, as I could then make sure of finding somebody with whom I could be entertained in my own way. Even during dinner many things occurred, of which we had reason to complain, for some of the guests had drunk to excess, and subsequently they insisted on playing a game of forfeits. A general noise and tumult ensued. Narcissus had lost a forfeit, and he was directed to redeem it by whispering something agreeable in the ear of every individual in the company. He lingered too long, as it appears, with a lady who was sitting near me, the wife of a military officer: whereupon the latter struck him so violent a blow upon the ear, that the powder flew from his hair in all directions. When I had recovered a little from my alarm, I observed that they had both drawn their swords. Narcissus was bleeding, and the other, excited by wine, anger, and jealousy, could scarcely be restrained by the whole company from doing some further act of violence. I seized Narcissus by the arm, and led him from the apartment. I conducted him to a room up-stairs, and as I did not deem that my friend even here was safe from his enraged enemy, I bolted the door.

We did not think the injury a serious one, for we perceived only a slight cut across the hand; but we were soon alarmed by the sight of blood which was flowing down his back, and which issued from a deep wound in his head. I felt alarmed. I ran to the stairs to procure assistance, but I could see no one, for the whole party had remained below to assist in quieting the infuriated captain. At length one of the daughters of our hostess appeared, and her air of mirth distressed me, as she could not help laughing heartily at the extraordinary scene which had occurred. I implored her to send for a surgeon, whereupon she rushed down stairs for the purpose.

I returned to my wounded friend, and tied my handkerchief about his hand, and bound his head with a napkin which hung against the door. Streams of blood still flowed from the wound. He turned pale, and appeared about to faint. There was no one near to render any assistance, so I took him without farther ceremony in my arms, and sought to cheer his spirits by patting his cheek, and speaking kindly

to him. The good effect was immediate, he continued to retain his senses, but he was still deadly pale.

At length our hostess entered, and she evinced the greatest alarm at seeing my friend in such a condition, lying in my arms, whilst we were both covered with blood. No one had informed her that Narcissus had been wounded, all imagined that I had taken him away in safety.

Wine, scent-bottles, and every thing else that could refresh and stimulate him, were now produced in abundance. The surgeon also arrived, and it seemed high time for me to leave; but Narcissus held me firmly by the hand, though indeed I should have remained without any such compulsion. Whilst they bound his wounds I continued to supply him with wine, and I was wholly indifferent to the presence of the rest of the company. When the surgeon had completed his task, my friend took a silent but affectionate leave of me, and he was then carried home.

Our hostess now conducted me to her bed-room, she insisted on undressing me, and whilst they washed the blood from my person, I could perceive with pleasure for the first time, in a mirror, that I might be considered beautiful without the aid of clothing. I could not resume any part of my own apparel, and as my friends were all either taller or shorter than myself, I returned home to the astonishment of my family, dressed in the strangest possible disguise. The latter were indignant at the fright which I had sustained, as well as at the wound of my friend, at the folly of the captain, and, indeed, at the whole occurrence. My father was on the very point of avenging his friend, by challenging the captain on the spot. He censured the gentlemen who had been present, for not having instantly punished the murderous attack; for it was too clear that the captain, after he had struck Narcissus the first blow, had drawn his sword, and wounded him from behind: the cut upon the hand had not been given, until Narcissus was in the act of drawing his sword. I was affected and distressed beyond measure. I know not how to describe my sensations. The emotions which had lain asleep within my heart were aroused at once, like flames when they receive the air. And if a state of happiness and joy are well adapted for the first production, and the secret nourishment of love,

this feeling, which is impetuous by nature, is most easily impelled by terror to a declaration and decision. I was recommended to retire to bed; and my father, on the following morning, visited our wounded friend, and found him suffering from an attack of fever.

My father communicated to me but little of the conversation which ensued; but he sought to tranquillise my mind as to the probable results of the event which had occurred. It was doubtful whether they should accept an apology, or whether the affair should be brought before a Court of Justice. I knew my father too well to suppose that he would be satisfied at seeing the matter end without a duel; but I remained silent, having long since learnt from him, that it was wrong for our sex to interfere with things of this description. It did not seem that any other circumstance had happened between them, in which my interests were much concerned; but before long my father communicated in confidence the purport of his further conversation to my mother. He stated, that Narcissus appeared to be much affected at the assistance which I had rendered him, that he had embraced my father, and declared that he was my everlasting debtor, and that he desired no happiness which he could not share with me; and begged that he might be permitted to consider my father as his own. My mother repeated all this to me, adding the prudent reflection, "that as these expressions of my wounded friend had escaped from him in the first agitation of his mind, no great importance ought, perhaps, to be attributed to them." "You are quite right," I replied, with affected indifférence, though Heaven alone can tell the nature of my feelings at the moment.

Narcissus remained ill for two months, and the wound in his right hand prevented him from writing; but in the mean time he evinced his attachment for me by the most obliging attentions. Uniting all these unusual civilities with the account which I had received from my mother, my mind became filled with all sorts of fancies. The whole city talked of the circumstance. I was myself addressed by my friends in a tone of seriousness, and they drew inferences from the occurrence which affected me deeply, notwithstanding all my efforts to avoid them. All that before had seemed but the result of habit and trifling, assumed now the form of a

serious attachment, and my continued anxiety became the stronger, the more I sought to hide it from my acquaintance. I was terrified at the apprehension of losing him, and the possibility of forming a nearer connection made me tremble. The very thought of marriage is alarming to the mind of a mere girl.

These ceaseless agitations compelled me once more to recollect myself. The bright picture of a thoughtless life, which had ever been before my eyes, now completely vanished. My soul awoke; but my long interrupted intimacy with my Invisible friend was not so easily renewed. We still continued widely separated—something of my old feeling towards him returned; but I could observe a strange difference.

A duel had taken place without my knowledge, in which the captain was severely wounded, and the public opinion was expressed loudly in favour of my friend, who appeared once more upon the scene. He had already visited us with a wounded head and hand, and violent were the beatings of my heart upon the occasion. The whole family was present, and nothing more occurred on either side, than mere expressions of thanks and formal displays of politeness; but he found an opportunity to afford me some private evidences of his affection, which once more rendered me restless. Upon his complete recovery Narcissus resumed his visits, and during the entire winter he continued on the same intimate footing as formerly; but notwithstanding all his secret tokens of attachment and love, the whole affair remained undecided.

Thus was I kept in a constant state of excitement. But I could not entrust any one with my secret, and I was too far removed from God to enjoy happiness. For four long years I had quite forgotten him: and now, when I thought of him once more, my feelings had grown cold, and my visits to him were those of mere ceremony; and, as upon those occasions, I always dressed myself in my very best attire, and never failed to make a display of my virtue, honour, and superior excellence, he failed to recognise me in my finery.

A courtier would have been much disappointed if a Prince, from whom he expected promotion, had acted towards him in this manner, but it did not, in the least, affect me. I had everything that I needed, health and the ordinary

comforts of life. I was content if it should please God to think of me, and if he should not, I flattered myself that I had at least discharged my duty.

This, however, was not my opinion at that period, but it is the true description of my state of mind. But preparations were already in progress which were to change and purify my thoughts.

The season of spring arrived. One day Narcissus visited me unannounced, when I was quite alone. He declared himself to be my lover, and asked me whether I would enrich him with my heart, and bless him with my hand as soon as he should succeed in obtaining some honourable and lucrative appointment.

He had already been taken into the service of the state; but he had been kept back, and his promotion had been impeded by misapprehensions of his ambitious character; and as he was possessed of a small private fortune, the salary which he received was inconsiderable.

Notwithstanding my affection for him, I knew that he was not a person towards whom one could act with perfect frankness. I determined therefore to refer him to my father; and though Narcissus did not apprehend his refusal, he was anxious first to obtain my own consent. At length I accepted him, but made the approbation of my parents an indispensable condition of our engagement. He spoke formally to them both; and they expressed their satisfaction and agreed to his proposal, upon the prospect of his approaching promotion, which was anxiously looked for. Sisters and aunts were informed of the arrangement; but a promise of secresy was exacted from them.

My lover was now converted into a bridegroom. The difference between these characters soon shewed itself to be considerable. If the lovers of all honorable maidens could be converted into bridegrooms, it would confer a great benefit upon the whole sex, even though marriage should not always be the result. The love of affianced persons undergoes no change: but it becomes more reasonable. Countless little follies, coquetteries and humours instantly vanish. Should the bridegroom say that we look better in a morning cap than in the most elaborate head-dress, no prudent young lady will henceforth trouble herself about the latter; and

nothing is more natural, than that a husband should think of solid advantages, and should rather prefer to form a careful housewife for himself than to decorate a doll for others. And it is the same in every other affair of life.

If a young lady so circumstanced has the good fortune to possess a bridegroom of talents and education, she learns more from his instruction, than she could do from universities or foreign travel. She not only receives his information gladly, but she exerts herself strenuously to improve herself. Love renders impossibilities themselves possible. Before long that obedience begins, which is so necessary and so becoming in the female sex, but the bridegroom does not exercise authority like the husband; he merely asks, and his intended partner tries to anticipate his wishes, and to fulfil them before he can solicit their performance.

In this way did I learn from experience lessons which I would not, on any account, have missed. And I now felt as happy as any woman in the world could feel for a time.

A summer passed away amid these quiet joys. Narcissus never gave me the smallest reason to complain. He grew dearer to me every day. My whole soul was his—that he well knew, and he knew how to prize his knowledge. In the meantime something arose from the veriest trifles, which threatened, by degrees, to prove injurious to our union.

Narcissus conducted himself respectfully towards me as his affianced bride, and never dared to solicit the concession of any unlawful freedom. But our opinions differed as to the proper boundaries of modesty and virtue. It was my wish to walk securely, and to permit nothing which the whole world might not have observed. But he had been otherwise brought up, and did not approve of such strictness—constant disputes thus arose between us, but he never failed to praise my modesty though he sought to undermine my resolution.

And now the *serious* observations of my old French teacher occurred to me, as well as the measures of protection which I had spoken of at the same time.

I had once more resumed my intercourse with heaven. God had provided me with a dearly loved bridegroom, and I felt grateful for the favour. My earthly love had concen-

trated my whole soul and awakened all its energies, and these were not opposed to my intercourse with heaven. I poured out my complaints to God about everything that alarmed me, without observing that I was all the time seeking to possess the very object which occasioned my apprehensions. With full confidence in my own powers I did not pray, "Lead me not into temptation;" for, with regard to temptation, I had neither a thought nor a fear. Attired in this flimsy tinsel work of virtue, I presented myself before God: He did not reject me. The slightest advance which I made towards Him left the softest impression upon my soul, and this feeling induced me again to seek his presence.

In the whole world no other being lived for me except Narcissus, and no other object possessed the smallest charm. My love for dress had no other end than to please him, for if I had been certain that I was not to meet his eye, I should have neglected it altogether. I loved dancing, but when he was not near, the amusement was hateful to me. To appear at a brilliant entertainment to which he was not invited, I would neither purchase new dresses nor arrange old ones according to the prevailing fashion. I was, in that case, indifferent to everything, or, rather, one thing was equally distasteful to me as another. I thought my evenings well spent when I could assist at a card party, although formerly I disliked amusements of that description, and when some kind old friend rallied me upon the change, I would smile, perhaps, for the first time during the whole evening. It was the same with promenades and every other social entertainment—

> I had chosen him for my own—
> I seemed to live for him alone,
> I longed for nothing but his love.

Thus, even in the midst of society, I was often alone, and perfect solitude was my greatest delight. But my busy mind could neither sleep nor dream. I felt, and thought, and wished for power to describe my feelings and my intercourse with God. Certain other emotions soon became unfolded in my mind, which were not discordant with those I have described. My love towards Narcissus was in perfect harmony with the great plan of nature, and was in no respect opposed to my duties. They did not contradict

each other, and yet they were essentially different in character. Narcissus was the only being who filled my mind and engaged all my affections, but the other feeling of which I have spoken, bore relation to nothing which existed, though it was unspeakably pleasant. But I possess it no longer now, and am incapable of imparting it to another.

My lover, who was acquainted with almost all my secrets, knew nothing of this. I soon found that we did not wholly coincide in thought, as he occasionally lent me books which, with frivolous or serious arguments, controverted the idea of a connection with the Invisible. I perused the books because they came from him, but I never remembered a single word that they contained.

His conduct with regard to my studies of the sciences, and of the other branches of knowledge, was no less incomprehensible. After the fashion of men, he laughed at the idea of learned women, and yet he never ceased to instruct me. With the exception of law, he was accustomed to converse with me upon all subjects, and whilst he provided me with books of every description, he always repeated the doubtful maxim, "that a woman ought to conceal her knowledge more closely than a Calvinist his faith in Catholic countries." And whilst I, therefore, endeavoured not to display my learning, more than I had formerly been accustomed to do, he could not resist the vanity of perpetually boasting of me and of my acquirements.

A person of much celebrity, and who was also highly esteemed for his talents and influence, was at this time residing at the court, and was received everywhere with great applause. He had selected Narcissus for his companion, and kept him constantly in his society. An argument arose between them upon one occasion about female virtue. Narcissus related the conversation to me at length, and I offered my own remarks upon the subject, in consequence of which, he requested that I would reduce my opinions to writing. I could correspond easily in French, as I had been well grounded in that language by the instructions of my teacher. I had also frequently written to Narcissus in French; and, at that period, the higher branches of instruction could only be derived from French books. The Count

was pleased with my essay, and I was requested to furnish him with some little songs which I had formerly composed. In short, Narcissus took the greatest pleasure in making a display of the talents of his beloved. The whole affair ended, to his unfeigned delight, with a poetical epistle in French, which the Count forwarded to him upon his departure. It alluded to the friendly argument which they had formerly had together, and my friend was cordially congratulated upon being destined, after so many doubts and errors, to learn what virtue was, in the arms of a virtuous and loving wife.

This poem was shewn to me in the first place, and then to almost all our friends, every one forming his own opinion upon its merits. He acted generally in this manner, and almost every stranger whom he valued, became intimate at our house.

A family of rank was passing some time in the place, to secure the attendance of a certain eminent physician. Narcissus was regarded by them as a son, and having introduced me, we both experienced, in the society of these worthy persons, the most delightful recreation both for mind and heart, and even the ordinary amusements of society appeared in this house to be less insipid than elsewhere. The relation in which we stood towards each other was well known, we were treated as circumstances allowed, and the most important feature in our case was never alluded to. I mention this acquaintance because subsequently it exerted an important influence upon my life.

We had now been engaged for a year, and the spring was drawing to a close. The summer came, and brought its heat and dry discomfort.

Some state appointments had become vacant, to which Narcissus might have laid claim. The moment was now approaching which was to decide my fate; and whilst Narcissus and his friends were exerting themselves earnestly to remove some unfavourable impressions which existed against him at court, in order to secure the vacant situation, I addressed my appeal to the Invisible. I was received so kindly that I returned. I candidly expressed my anxiety that Narcissus might obtain the place, but my prayer was not importunate, and I did not beg that success might be the result of my petition.

The place was obtained by a rival of far inferior pretensions. I was terrified at the news, and hastened to my chamber, the door of which I locked securely behind me. The first shock of grief disappeared in a flood of tears; my next reflection was "it has not happened by chance," and then followed a determination, on my part, to be resigned and satisfied, as this apparent evil might be intended for my true advantage. The softest emotions now succeeded—the dark clouds of sorrow were dispersed—and I felt that with such support, I was capable of bearing whatever might happen. To the great astonishment of my companions, I descended cheerfully to dinner.

Narcissus had less firmness than I possessed, and I was obliged, therefore, to comfort him. He had many difficulties to contend with in his own family, and as a perfect confidence existed between us, he had confided them all to me. His negociations for entering into foreign service were not more fortunate; I felt his disappointment keenly, both on his account and on my own, and, in the end, I carried all our difficulties to that place where my prayers had already been so favourably received.

The consolations which I derived from them, were so sweet, that I was eager to renew my experience of them, and I expected that they would always be found where they had so often appeared. But comfort did not continue to visit me. I resembled a man who wishes to bask in the sun's rays, but cannot succeed on account of some obstacle which perpetually casts a shadow. "What can the matter be?" was a question which I often asked myself. Upon instituting a strict inquiry, I found that it all came from the condition of my soul, and observed that if it were not turned wholly towards God, I remained cold and received no answer to my supplications. I then asked a second question, "Whence arises the obstacle?" and this inquiry opened to me a wide field, until I found myself entangled in an investigation which continued even during the second year of my engagement. I might have ended the inquiry sooner, for, before long, I found a clue to the mystery, but I was unwilling to acknowledge it, and I had recourse to a thousand subterfuges to deceive myself.

I soon perceived that the proper inclinations of my soul

were impeded by senseless dissipations and unworthy pursuits—the How and the Where seemed evident enough, yet I was at a loss to know by what means I could disentangle myself from the claims of a world, in which everything was marked by indifference or extravagance. I would willingly have allowed matters to remain as they were, and have passed a quiet life, like other people who appeared quite happy, but I dared not, my conscience was averse to such a course—for, even if I had wished to forsake society and change my mode of life, I could not do so—I was confined within the limits of a circle, I could not detach myself from certain influences; and, upon the question which so deeply concerned me, the obligations of life oppressed me more and more. Oftentimes did I retire weeping to my bed, and, after a sleepless night, I rose again in tears. I required some strong support, but God would not grant it to me, so long as I continued to wear the cap of folly.

I proceeded now to consider attentively what had been my course of life. My love for dancing and for play formed the first subjects of inquiry. I examined every objection which had ever been conceived, spoken, or written against these amusements; I weighed and considered them all, aggravating and plaguing myself upon the subject. If I were willing to give them up, I felt certain that Narcissus would be offended, as he had always trembled at the ridicule with which the world never fails to visit conscientious persons; and, on the other hand, it was to me beyond measure distressing to pursue my present career of folly, not from any taste of my own, but for his sole gratification. It would be impossible for me, without having recourse to disagreeable prolixities and repetitions, to explain the trouble which I took to disengage myself from those pursuits which disturbed my peace of mind, in order that I might open my heart to the influences of the Invisible; but I perceived with pain that I could not attain my object by this means, for the garment of folly had been to me more than a mask—its effects had pierced me through and through.

May I here wander a little from this historical narrative, to reflect for a moment upon what was going on within my mind? How did it happen that, in my twenty-second year, my habits of thought were so changed that I had lost all

taste for those pleasures in which so many young persons find an innocent delight? Why did I consider them to be no longer innocent? I reply, because, for me, they were not innocent; because, I was not now, like so many of my equals, ignorant of the state of my soul. No; I knew from experience which had come to me unsought, that there are higher emotions, which afford us a more genuine satisfaction than can be found in the pleasures of the world, and that these higher joys contain a secret treasure for supporting the spirit in misfortune.

But social pleasures and the dissipations of youth must have possessed a peculiar charm for me, since I found it impossible to feel indifferent to them. How many things could I now do with perfect indifference which, at a former period, would have led me astray or obtained the mastery over me. There could be no middle course here, the charms of pleasure or the active and salutary emotions of my soul must be abandoned.

But the contest had been already decided in my own mind, and that without my knowledge. Even if I had still retained a wish to pursue earthly indulgences, I was no longer able to relish them. The greatest lover of wine would lose all appetite for drinking if he were placed in a well-filled cellar, where the foul air threatened to suffocate him. Pure air is more valuable than wine. This I felt too sensibly, and with me it would have needed but little reflection to prefer the good to the agreeable, if I had not been checked by the fear of losing the favour of Narcissus. But at length, after many an inward struggle, and much quiet reflection, and many a look cast upon the bonds which united me to him, I perceived that they were after all but weak, and that I could easily rend them asunder. I perceived that it was but a bell of glass which enclosed me within its airless space, and that if I had strength enough to break it in pieces, I should become free!

I thought, and I resolved. I laid the mask aside, and acted thenceforth pursuant to the dictates of my heart. I still loved Narcissus dearly, but the thermometer of my affections, which had stood previously in warm water, was now exposed to the natural air, and would not rise higher than the heat of the surrounding atmosphere.

Unfortunately, the latter cooled exceedingly. Narcissus drew back, and assumed an air of coldness. He was at liberty to do so, but my thermometer fell in proportion to his reserve. My family observed the change: they questioned me, and expressed their astonishment. I declared with firm determination that I had already made sacrifices enough, that I was ready to share all his embarrassments with him, even to the end of his life, but that I required perfect freedom for my own actions, and that my conduct, whether active or passive, must be regulated by my own convictions; that I would never obstinately insist on my opinion, as I was always willing to be convinced, but since my happiness was in question, I was entitled to decide without being subject to any species of compulsion. The arguments of the greatest physician could never force me to take a single article of food, which, however agreeable it might be to many, experience should prove to be injurious to myself,—coffee, for example,—and so, I should never allow a course of conduct, which might mislead myself, to be recommended as morally profitable.

After a long course of silent reflections, I found discussions of this kind to be rather pleasant than otherwise. I breathed freely once more, and found the full value of my determination. I refused to make the least concession, and the arguments of all those to whom I owed a filial duty were quickly disposed of. At home I very soon had my own way. The views which I entertained had been my mother's from her very youth, though in her case they had never been matured, for she had been subject to no necessity, nor had her resolution ever been put to the test. She was pleased now to see me fulfil the wishes which she had indulged in silence. My younger sister was wholly on my side. My second sister was attentive, but said nothing. We had the greatest difficulty with our aunt. Her arguments appeared to be unanswerable, but they were altogether common-place. At length, I was compelled to insist that she should have no voice in the matter, and after this we could not easily learn whether she persisted in her sentiments. She was the only person who viewed the affair without being more or less affected. Without calumny, I may say that she had no character, and that her ideas were of the most limited nature.

My father acted upon his own convictions. He spoke

little, but frequently, with me upon the matter, but his arguments were sound, and being his, they could not be opposed. Indeed, nothing but the fullest consciousness of my own right gave me courage to dispute with him. But the scene soon changed. I was compelled to appeal to his heart. Overcome by his reasonings, I had recourse to the most pathetic pleadings. I gave full scope to my tongue, and to my tears. I proved to him how much I loved Narcissus. I showed him what I had suffered for the last two years, how convinced I was of being in the right, which I was ready to prove by giving up my beloved bridegroom and every hope of happiness, and if it were necessary, by the loss of every thing that I possessed, assuring him that I would rather forsake my native land and all my relatives and friends, and toil for my daily bread amongst strangers, than act in opposition to my convictions. He concealed his emotion, remained silent for some time, and at length declared himself openly in my favour.

Narcissus had for some time discontinued to visit us, and my father soon ceased to attend the club which the former was accustomed to frequent. The whole affair was canvassed publicly at court and in the town. But I was sufficiently well acquainted with the world to know that our conduct is often censured by the very persons who would have acted in a similar way themselves, and, moreover, I was sufficiently composed to be wholly indifferent to their passing observations.

I did not, however, seek to stifle my affection for Narcissus. Though I saw him no more, my heart had not changed in the least towards him. I still loved him tenderly, as it were anew, and much more steadfastly than before. If he were only satisfied not to violate my conscientious feelings, then I was his, but without this condition, I would have rejected a kingdom with him. These feelings and thoughts had filled my mind for some months, and finding at length that I was sufficiently calm and collected, I wrote him a polite note, inquiring why he had ceased to visit me.

I was acquainted with his habit of avoiding to enter into an explanation of small matters, whilst he still pursued his own course in silence, and therefore I insisted on receiving an answer. He sent me a long and unsatisfactory reply,

couched in a vague style, and full of unmeaning phrases. He said that until he had obtained his promotion he could not offer me his hand, that I was aware of all the vexations he had hitherto endured, that he feared our continued intimacy might prove injurious to my reputation, and he hoped, therefore, that I would consent to his absence for a time, assuring me, however, that as soon as he should find himself in a condition to render me happy, he would redeem the pledges he had given to me.

I replied to him upon the spot, that as our engagement was known to all the world it was somewhat late to think of saving my reputation, and that for this, my own conscience and my own innocence were the surest guarantees, but that I unhesitatingly released him from his engagement and trusted he would find happiness. I received a short answer, which echoed the sentiments contained in his first letter. He continued to state that upon obtaining an appointment, he would share his good fortune with me.

This was equivalent to saying nothing. I thereupon informed my friends and relations that the matter was at an end, as in very truth it was. Nine months afterwards he obtained the wished-for appointment, when he once more offered me his hand, with the stipulation, that as the head of his household, I should consent to alter the opinions which I had expressed. I thanked him politely, and then took leave of the whole transaction as a man does when he leaves the theatre after the curtain has fallen. And as a short time afterwards he formed a rich and advantageous connection, and I knew him to be perfectly happy in his own way, my peace of mind was completely restored.

I must not omit to mention, that several times before he had obtained his promotion, and afterwards, I received more than one favourable proposal, which, however, I unhesitatingly refused, although my father and mother earnestly wished for my compliance.

And now, after a stormy March and April, I enjoyed the most lovely May weather. I had excellent health, and I felt an indescribable tranquillity of mind, and turn myself where I would, I seemed in all respects to be a gainer. Young and full of sensibility as I was, the world appeared to me a thousand times more beautiful than it had seemed

before, when I had thought society and dissipation necessary to dispel the tedium of existence. And now, as I was not ashamed of my religious feelings, I took courage to avow my love for the arts and sciences. I drew, I painted, I read; and I found numbers of persons ready to support me. In place of the great world which I had left, or rather which had abandoned me, I formed a smaller society around me, which was much richer and far more interesting. I had a love for social life, and I shall not deny that when I forsook my former acquaintances, I trembled at the very thought of solitude. But I was now abundantly recompensed. My circle of friends soon became numerous, not only in my own neighbourhood, amongst persons whose tastes were similar to my own, but even amongst strangers. My story had been very generally spoken of, and men were curious to see the maiden, who had prized her God more than her lover. Moreover, at that time a certain religious tone was observable in Germany. In many noble families an anxiety about spiritual things had been aroused, and even amongst the lower classes, thoughts of the same nature very generally prevailed.

The noble family of whom I have already spoken sought my closer intimacy. Their number had lately increased, as many of their relatives had joined them in the town. These estimable persons sought my society as anxiously as I did theirs. Their connections were amongst the highest circles, and in their family I became acquainted with most of the princes, nobles, and grandees of the realm. My habits of thought were a secret to no one, and whether my new friends respected them or not, I obtained my object and escaped all controversy.

But a new course of events soon led me back into the world. About this time, a step-brother of my father, who had formerly only visited us occasionally, took up his abode at our house. He had left the service of his court, because the business there was not conducted according to his wish, although he enjoyed universal honour and respect. His understanding was just, and his character was firm. He resembled my father in these respects, but the latter had a certain degree of softness, which rendered him more liable to yield in matters of business, and to permit, if not to

perform, certain things against his own conviction, to which he would reconcile himself in silence, or in confidential intercourse with his family. My uncle was many years his junior, and his mental independence was not a little strengthened by his worldly circumstances. His mother had been very rich, and his expectations were considerable from her near and distant relatives; he therefore needed no stranger's assistance, whilst my father's very moderate fortune bound him to his place by the consideration of his salary.

Domestic unhappiness had soured my uncle's temper. He had early lost a beloved wife, and a promising son; and from the time of their death he had sought to disengage himself from all unnecessary connection with other people.

It was rumoured with some degree of satisfaction in our family, that in all probability he would not marry again; and that we children might therefore calculate on inheriting his property. I paid no attention to this; but the conduct of the others was influenced in no slight degree by their expectations. His decision of character prevented him from ever contradicting any one in conversation; on the contrary, he was accustomed to listen kindly to the opinions of others, which he would seek to support and defend by his own reasons and arguments. Strangers always supposed that he adopted their sentiments, for his intellect was strong, and he could always fall into another person's style of thinking. He did not succeed so happily with me; for as the emotions of the mind generally formed the subject of our discourse, and he had not the smallest idea of their nature, it mattered little that he spoke with sympathy and toleration of my sentiments, since it was clear that he could not in the least comprehend the motives of my conduct.

In spite of his reserve, we soon learned the secret of his protracted residence amongst us. We discovered in the sequel that he had taken a fancy to my youngest sister, and that he wished to have her married and made happy according to a plan of his own; and her mental and personal accomplishments were such, that coupled with the prospect of a handsome fortune, she might aspire to forming the highest connection. Before long he displayed the opinion which he entertained of me, by procuring for me an appoint-

ment of Canoness, the income of which I soon commenced to receive.

My sister had less reason to be satisfied with his patronage. She now disclosed to me a little secret of her affections, which she had hitherto prudently concealed, fearing that I might use my influence with her, to oppose a match of which I could not but disapprove. I exerted myself and succeeded. My uncle's intentions were too evident and too important, and the prospects of my sister, with her worldly ideas, possessed stronger allurements for her, than a passion of which her judgment disapproved.

As soon as she had yielded to the gentle guidance of my uncle, the foundation of his plan was speedily laid. She was appointed Maid of Honour at a neighbouring court, where she was committed to the superintendence and instructions of a lady, who filled the situation of governess with great applause. I accompanied her to her new residence, and we were proud of the reception which we then received; and frequently I was unable to restrain a smile at the part which as Canoness, as a young and pious Canoness, I was henceforth to play in the world.

Formerly the character, which I was now called upon to fill, would have been enough to confound me, nay, would probably have turned my head; but, now, I was quite calm, amid all the excitement by which I was surrounded. For a couple of hours I allowed myself to be curled and dressed, and thought no more of the matter, than that I was required by my situation to assume a gay attire. I addressed every one whom I met in the well-fitted rooms of the palace, although no individual produced the least impression upon me. Upon my return home I had no recollection than that of extreme fatigue. Nevertheless I learned much from the crowds with whom I came in contact. I also became acquainted with many ladies, who excelled in every virtue, and whose conduct was noble and irreproachable. Amongst them was the governess, by whom the character and manners of my sister were to be matured.

I found, upon my return home, that the result of this journey was not favourable to my health. Notwithstanding my extreme temperance and the strictest attention to diet, I was mistress neither of my time nor of my strength. My

food and exercise, my hours for rising and retiring, for dressing and visiting, did not depend, as at home, upon my own will and inclination. In the circle of society one dares not pause without an infringement of decorum, and I discharged every necessary duty, from a conscientious motive, because that I knew that it would be soon over; and because I felt myself in perfect health. But nevertheless my new and restless mode of life must have affected me in an unusual manner, for scarcely had I reached home, and gratified my parents with a satisfactory account of my doings, than I was seized with illness, which, though not of a dangerous nature, reduced me to a state of deplorable weakness.

And now I had a new lesson to learn. I learnt it willingly. I felt no attachment to the world, as I was convinced that no real good was to be found there, and this conviction rendered me tranquil and happy. Nevertheless I was retained in existence, although I had long since abandoned every wish to survive.

But a further trial was in store for me. My mother was attacked by a painful sickness, which she had to endure for five long years, before she paid the debt of nature. During this time our sufferings were severe. Frequently when she became alarmed, she would summon us all to her bed-side in the night-time, in order that she might be comforted, and encouraged by our presence.

At length the load became oppressive, and, in truth, intolerable, when my father also began to suffer. From his earliest youth he had been subject to the most violent headaches, which, however, had never continued longer than six-and-thirty hours. But now they were incessant; and when they became excessive, his sufferings rent my very heart asunder. During these hours of trial, I was most sensible of my bodily infirmity, because it forbad the fulfilment of the holiest, the dearest duties, or rendered their discharge in the highest degree difficult.

I had now the full means of ascertaining, whether the path of life, which I had selected, was the way of phantasy or of truth; whether the object of my faith possessed a reality; and to my great support I always felt encouraged to persevere. The entire devotion of my heart to God—my companionship with his beloved saints—rendered every difficulty

light and supportable. As a traveller in the dark, when I felt the violence of outward pressure, I flew to the place of refuge, and never returned without experiencing relief.

Certain champions of religion, who possess more zeal than experience of its influence, have sometimes required the faithful to furnish a distinct proof, that earthly prayers have been actually heard in Heaven, wishing no doubt to be provided with seal and signature that they might institute legal and diplomatic proceedings. But how unacquainted must these persons be with the genuine feelings of religion! How worthless their experience of its effects!

I may safely say, that whenever I have sought the aid of Heaven in moments of distress and sorrow, I have never failed to find relief. This is much to say, and I dare not add more. For though my experience of the divine mercy has been of infinite importance to myself at the time of its occurrence, the detail would be insipid, and perhaps disbelieved, were I to specify individual cases. I felt happy, that a thousand trifling circumstances combined, proved to me as clearly as my own breathing established my existence, that I was not without God in the world. He was at my side—I was in his presence. This much I can assert, even though I employ no technical theological terms for the purpose.

How sincerely do I wish that I had been at that time free from the restraints of system. But which of us can easily attain the happiness of being conscious of his own particular individuality, unmingled with extraneous forms? I was in earnest about my happiness. I consulted the opinions of others with reluctance, and I adopted finally the Hallean principle of conversion, though my natural feelings were not wholly in harmony with it.

According to this plan, a change of heart must begin with a deep alarm at our past sinful life; the heart in its tribulation must be fully conscious of the punishment which it has deserved, thus acquiring a foretaste of the pains of hell, which embitters all the alluring charms of sin. At length we become conscious of a positive assurance of forgiveness, though this impression may subsequently fade away, and must be renewed again by earnest prayer.

But this was not my case. When I sought God sincerely, he condescended to visit me, and did not reproach me for

my past life. And, though upon taking a retrospect of bygone days, I felt conscious of my own deep continued unworthiness; yet I could confess my sins without being overcome by terror. I did not tremble at the fear of hell, nor did my thoughts dwell upon the idea of an evil spirit, or upon a place of punishment and torment after death. It seemed to me that those men who lived without God in the world, who closed their hearts against all love, and trust in the Invisible, were already so unhappy, that a hell and sensible pains would rather alleviate, than increase their misery. And when I observed those persons, who nourish revengeful feelings within their bosoms, who harden their hearts against every species of good, and subject themselves and others to the influence of evil, who close their eyes in the open daylight, that they may be able to deny the brilliancy of the sun, how utterly wretched did they appear to me! What hell could render their condition worse?

I continued in this state of mind for a period of ten years. It endured through many trials, and even survived the painful death-bed of my beloved mother. I was unreserved enough upon that occasion, to afford evidence of my happy mental condition in the presence of certain pious and orthodox people; and I had, on that account, to suffer many a friendly reproof. They seized the opportunity to remind me with what earnestness we ought to lay a good foundation whilst our health continues.

And I was resolutely determined to succeed. I yielded to their views for the moment; and I would gladly have passed my life in tears and terror. But, to my surprise, I found that this was impossible. When I turned my thoughts to God, I at once became cheerful and happy; and even the remembrance of my dear mother's painful death did not make me shudder at the thought of dissolution. But in those solemn hours I learned many other things, to which my gratuitous instructors were themselves strangers.

By degrees I began to doubt the correctness of the religious views adopted by these celebrated people; and I maintained my own sentiments in silence. A certain lady, to whom I had already disclosed too much, interfered perpetually with me, until I was compelled to rid myself of her. I was obliged, upon one occasion, to tell her in a decisive tone,

that she must spare her unnecessary labour, as I did not stand in need of her advice, that I trusted in God, and would have no guide but Him. She was highly incensed; and I believe has never forgiven me to this day.

This resolution to dispense with the advice and assistance of my friends in spiritual affairs, encouraged me to follow my own guidance in temporal matters. But I could not have been successful without the aid of my Invisible Guide, and I cannot conceal my astonishment at the wise and fortunate inspirations with which I was favoured. No person knew how I was circumstanced, I myself was scarcely conscious of my own condition.

That thing, that evil and inexplicable thing, which separates us from the Being to whom we are indebted for our existence, from that Being who supports within us all that merits the name of life, that evil which we call Sin was wholly unknown to me.

My intercourse with the Invisible secured to me the sweetest enjoyments of all my mental and bodily powers. My anxiety to render this happiness perpetual became so great that I willingly abandoned every thing by which it might be impaired, and here experience proved my most unerring instructor. But I resembled an invalid, who for want of medicine, endeavours to find relief in diet. Something is effected but not enough. I was unable to live in perpetual solitude, although I found in such a state the best security against the dissipation of my thoughts. But when I returned to active life, I felt the strong impression which had been produced upon me by the change. It was a great advantage to me that my love for quiet was so overpowering, and I always turned insensibly to that mode of existence. I had a dim twilight perception of my misery and weakness, and I sought to save myself by avoiding unnecessary exposure.

For seven years I obeyed the dictates of my own suggestions. In my own estimation I was not wicked, and I even thought my condition enviable. But for some peculiar circumstances, I should have continued to be of this opinion; a remarkable occurrence however induced me to follow a new course of conduct. Contrary to the advice of all my friends, I formed another connection, and though their objections

caused me to hesitate at first, I sought advice from my Invisible Guide, and as he offered no objection, I advanced without apprehension.

An intellectual, kind and talented personage had purchased some property in our neighbourhood. He and his family became intimate with my friends, and as in our manners, habits and domestic arrangements, we closely resembled each other, the acquaintance which we formed soon ripened into friendship.

Philo, for by that name I shall designate him, was of mature age, and in the transaction of certain matters of business, he had already proved of great assistance to my father, whose strength was now decaying visibly. He soon became intimate with our family, and as he frequently stated that he found in me, a person free alike from the extravagance and insipidity of the great world, and from the closeness and illiberality which is occasioned by a life of retirement, he sought my intimacy, and before long he succeeded in winning my confidence. I found him an agreeable and useful friend.

Although I had not the least talent or taste for general business, nor any wish to mingle in its concerns, I liked to hear of public occurrences, and to know what happened far and near. I was anxious to possess a clear though calm perception of worldly things, whilst I reserved my feelings, my sympathies, and attachments for my God, my family and my friends.

I must admit that the latter were jealous of the new acquaintance which I had formed, and for more reasons than one they were right in warning me against it. I suffered much in private, for I could not consider their apprehension as altogether groundless or selfish. I had always been accustomed to examine and to justify my conduct, but in this case I could not conquer my convictions, I prayed to God that he would warn, restrain and guide me, and as I had the approval of my own heart, I pursued my course with comfort.

Upon the whole, there was some distant resemblance between Philo and Narcissus, but the pious education of the former rendered his feelings more active and concentrated. He possessed less vanity and more character than the latter, and if Narcissus in worldly matters was precise, exact, per-

severing, and unwearied, Philo on the other hand was clear, prompt, quick, and able to work with incredible ease. From him I learned the private history of almost every distinguished person with whom I had become acquainted in society, and I took pleasure in observing the course of their career from my watch tower from afar. He could conceal nothing from me. By degrees he confided to me all his inward emotions, and informed me of his outward circumstances. I trembled on his account, as I foresaw certain conditions and entanglements that must ensue, and the evil came sooner than I had reason to expect. He had always withheld certain confessions from me, and even at last he only unfolded sufficient of them to enable me to guess the worst.

What an effect this produced upon my heart? I acquired experience which was wholly new to me. With indescribable grief I saw before me an Agathon who had been brought up within the groves of Delphi, but who still owed his education fee, a debt which he was now discharging with heavy interest; and this Agathon was my firmly attached friend. My sympathy was warm and complete. I suffered with him, and we both found ourselves strangely circumstanced.

Having employed myself long in reflecting upon the qualities of his mind, I at length turned to the consideration of my own. The reflection that I was really no better than he, rose like a little cloud before me, and gradually expanded until it enveloped my whole soul in darkness.

My apprehension upon this point soon amounted to conviction, and my feelings became so painful that I should not like again to experience them. And this was no passing impression. For more than a year I felt that if some invisible hand had not withheld me, I might have become a Cartouche, a Girard, a Damiens, or any other monster. I saw the inclination for crime too plainly within my heart, and the discovery made me tremble.

If experience had never previously convinced me of the fact that sin really existed within my breast, its possibility now became fearfully apparent. It is true that I was not acquainted with evil, I only feared it—I felt that guilt was possible for me, although there was in reality nothing of which I could be accused.

Although my conviction was deep that in such a condition of my soul I could never become fitted for that union with the Eternal which I hoped to enjoy after death, I had no apprehension of a final separation from Him. I loved Him, notwithstanding all the evil which I had discovered within myself, but I hated what I felt, and wished to hate it still more strongly; my whole wish was to be freed from this infirmity—this tendency to evil, and I knew that the great Physician would not withhold his assistance.

The only question now was what remedy would cure the malady? The practice of virtue. Of this I could not for a moment be persuaded, since for ten long years I had been unwearied in the practice of something more than virtue, and during all that period the horrors which I now observed had lain concealed within my soul. Might they not suddenly have burst forth as occurred with David when he saw Bathsheba—and was not he also a friend of God, and did I not feel thoroughly convinced that God was my friend?

Is sin then to be considered as an unavoidable weakness of human nature? Must we satisfy ourselves with feeling and acknowledging the predominance of our passions, and in spite of our best resolutions have we no alternative than to detect the crime which we have committed, and repeat it again when a similar temptation occurs?

The teachings of morality afforded me no consolation. Neither their severe rules which seek to subdue our passions, nor their mild regulations which would enlist our inclinations on the side of virtue, could content me. The principles which I had learned from the intercourse with my Invisible Guide possessed for me a far more sterling value.

When, upon one occasion, I was engaged in studying the Psalms which David composed after his dreadful fall, it seemed to me that he had perceived the evil which dwelt within him to exist in the very substance out of which his nature was formed, and yet he wished to be freed from this slavery of sin, and earnestly prayed for purity of heart.

But how was this to be obtained? I was well aware of the answers which the Scriptures afford, and it was for me a Bible truth that "the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin." But I soon perceived that as yet I had never understood this oft repeated saying. The question "What does

that mean? how is it to happen?" agitated me day and night. At length, I thought I perceived, as by a glimmering light, that the object of my search was to be discovered in the incarnation of the Eternal Word, by whom we and every thing had been created. That the everlasting God descended into the depths which we inhabit, and dwelt amongst us, that he sees and understands all things, that he passed through every alternation of our condition, from his conception and birth, to the grave, and that by this wonderful course he ascended once more to those blessed heights, which we also must attain, in order to be happy,—all this was revealed to me, though in a dim and indistinct manner.

But why, in order to understand such things, must we employ figures which can only express exterior situations? What object can be either high or deep, dark or bright in His eyes? We alone possess an under and an above, a day and a night, and therefore was it that He became like unto us, because otherwise we could have no part in Him.

But how can we participate in this invaluable benefit? "By faith," the holy Scripture replies. And what is faith? To believe the relation of an event as true. How can that assist me? I must become imbued with its effects, its consequences; and this appropriating faith must be a peculiar condition of the mind, to which the natural man is unaccustomed.

"And now, Almighty! grant me faith!" I prayed in the deepest anguish of my heart. I bent my head down upon a small table before which I sat, and I buried my tear-stained face within my hands. I was now in that condition in which every man must be, if he expects that God will listen to his prayers, a condition in which, alas! we seldom find ourselves.

O that I could but describe my feelings at that moment. A sudden attraction brought my soul to the foot of the cross upon which Jesus died; it was an inward constraint, I cannot describe it by any other expression, it resembled that impulse which attracts our soul to an absent lover, by an invisible contact which is perhaps more true and real than we suppose. Thus was my soul brought near to the Son of Man, who died upon the cross, and in the same moment I recognized what faith really was.

"This is faith," I exclaimed, and I sprang half terrified to my feet. I sought to assure myself of my feelings, of my senses, and I now became convinced that my spirit had acquired a capability of soaring to heaven, which it had never possessed before.

Words cannot describe my sensations. I could distinguish them wholly from every resemblance to imagination. They had no connection with fancy or with figure. They brought before me the actuality of some object, which the mind sees when it paints the features of an absent lover.

When the first feeling of delight had subsided, I saw that I had at other times experienced this condition of the soul, but I had never felt it so forcibly as at present. I had never retained it, nor made it my own. I believe that every man has experienced this at one time or another. Doubtless, it is this sensation which teaches us that there is a God.

I had previously been satisfied with my occasional experiences of this influence, and if an unexpected sorrow had not unhappily afflicted me for a year, beyond my ability and strength to bear, I might, perhaps, have been for ever content to remain in this condition.

But now, since that exalted moment, I had, as it were, acquired wings. I could soar aloft, above all obstacles, as a bird can fly singing, and with ease, across the swiftest stream, which a dog, with all its barking, is unable to pass.

My joy was unspeakable, and though I explained the circumstances to no one, my friends observed an unwonted cheerfulness in my demeanour, for which they could not account. If I had only remained silent and sought to preserve the pure feelings of my soul,—if I had not permitted myself to be betrayed by circumstances to reveal my secret I should have escaped an infinity of pain.

During the previous ten years of my Christian career, my soul had not possessed its necessary powers, and I resembled the greater part of other worthy people. I had been accustomed to store my fancy with images which bore some reference to God, and in truth this course was not wholly unproductive of benefit to me. They seemed to exclude all injurious impressions, as well as evil effects, and frequently my soul, seizing one or other of these spiritual

images, soared aloft like a young bird fluttering from bough to bough. And, therefore, in default of better advantages, this practice should not be hastily condemned.

The institutions of the Church provide us with an abundance of ideas and impressions, which direct the soul to God, such as organs, bells, hymns, and, above all, the sermons of our pastors. To all these things, I was especially devoted. No unfavourable weather, no bodily indisposition could prevent my attendance at church, and whenever I was confined to bed by illness, the sound of the church bells was the only thing that rendered me impatient. I always attended the instructions of the Court chaplain with the greatest delight, was pleased with his assistants, and I could select the golden apples of God's word from the common fruit with which it was often mingled. Private devotions of various kinds were combined with the public prayers, and these nourished my spiritual fancies and improved my finer sensibilities. I soon became so accustomed to these pursuits and felt so high a degree of reverence for them, that even now I can conceive no idea more exalted. For my soul has no eyes—it is all sensibility—it feels, but does not see. O, that it could acquire the power of sight, and would dare to look forward!

I continued to attend sermons with a mind full of desire and anxiety, but, alas! they had ceased to furnish me with the same exalted pleasure as formerly. The preachers seemed to be engaged with the shell of the fruit, whilst I was enjoying the kernel. I soon became weary of them. They could offer me nothing, which I could not find without their assistance. I required food for my imagination. I wanted impressions from without, and thought that the craving which I felt was of the purest spiritual nature.

Philo's relations had been connected with the Herrnhuthers, and his library contained several works which had been written by the Count who had founded the society. He had frequently conversed with me upon the subject, in the most unreserved manner, and had invited me to look through some of those treatises, if it were only as a psychological study, as I am far from considering the Count and his adherents to be orthodox, and therefore I had not read the Ebersdorf hymn book which my friend had pressed upon me.

But in my absolute want of all outward sources of excitement, I accidentally took up that hymn book, and, to my surprise, I found that it contained some compositions, which, under a strange form, appeared to furnish all that I desired. I was attracted by the originality and simplicity of their style. Peculiar emotions were expressed in an unusual manner, and there were no technical expressions to suggest formal or common-place ideas. I was convinced that these people felt as I did, and I found extreme delight in learning some of their hymns by heart and repeating them for several days in succession.

Three months had passed away in this manner from the moment when I had received the gift of truth. At length I formed the resolution of imparting every thing to my friend Philo, and of asking him to lend me those writings which I had now become extremely curious to read—and I did so, notwithstanding the secret reluctance of my heart.

I told him my whole story in detail, and, as he was one of the chief persons who figured in my narrative, which conveyed a sort of rebuke to himself, he was in the highest degree excited and affected. He burst into tears. I felt delighted, and believed that he had undergone a total change of mind.

He gave me all the writings that I could require, and my imagination was now provided with an excess of nourishment. I made rapid progress in the Zinzendorf style of thinking and of speaking. But it must not be supposed that I do not properly appreciate the merits of the Count. I am anxious to do him justice. He is no empty dreamer. He announces mighty truths in the boldest figurative style, and those by whom he is condemned, can neither value nor distinguish his high acquirements.

My attachment for him became extreme. Had I been independent, I should have abandoned my country and my friends in order to join him. We should, undoubtedly, have understood each other, though probably we should not have continued long together.

I felt grateful to my good genius that my time was so completely absorbed in household occupations. I considered that I made a long journey when I visited the garden. The care of my aged and infirm parent provided me with em-

ployment enough, and I could always find amusement in the resources of my own imagination. Philo was the only being whom I saw, my father valued him highly, but his attachment for me had suffered a little from our late explanation. It had not produced a very deep impression upon him, and as he was not successful in some efforts which he made to converse in my dialect, he avoided repeating the attempt, particularly as his extensive acquirements always provided him with sufficient topics of conversation.

Thus I had voluntarily become a member of the Society of Herrnhuthers, but I found it necessary to conceal from my clergyman this new inclination of my mind. I esteemed him highly as my confessor, and even his strong aversion to the Herrnhuthers could not impair my opinion of his merits. Unfortunately this worthy man had to endure many troubles on my account and on that of others.

Several years previously he had become acquainted with a gentleman of piety and learning, and he had entered into a correspondence with him, as with a person who was in earnest search of God. It would be difficult to describe the pain which he suffered when this gentleman subsequently joined the community to which I allude, or to express his delight, when, at length, a misunderstanding ensued which caused him to forsake the brethren and to take up his abode in our neighbourhood. He seemed once more to abandon himself completely to the guidance of his former friend.

The stranger was now triumphantly introduced to all the dear lambs of the pastor's flock. He was not, however, presented to us, as my father had given up entertaining company, but in every other quarter he was received with approbation. He united the refinement of the Count with the attractive manners of the society which he had left, and as he possessed many fine natural qualities, he soon became the favourite saint of all who knew him—a result which highly pleased the clergyman. But, unfortunately, this gentleman only differed from the Herrnhuthers in external matters, in heart and soul he was altogether one of the community. He felt a deep interest in the reality of the system, and yet the ceremonials which had been introduced by the Count were quite in accordance with his taste. He

had become accustomed to their style of thinking and of speaking, and if he concealed all this carefully from his former friend, he found it the more necessary, whenever he met with a collection of his trusty associates, to introduce his hymns, his litanies, and little figures, in all of which, as we may easily suppose, he met with the greatest applause.

I was ignorant of the whole affair, and pursued my own separate course. For a considerable time we were unknown to each other.

Once during a leisure hour I paid a visit to an invalid friend. I found several acquaintances with her, and as I soon observed that I had interrupted their conversation, I affected to pay no attention to what had occurred, and, before long, to my great surprise, I saw some favourite pictures of the Herrnhuthers hanging from the wall in elegant frames. I quickly understood what had taken place previous to my arrival, and I expressed my pleasure by repeating some appropriate verses.

Judge of the astonishment of my friends. We mutually explained ourselves and were admitted into each other's confidence.

Henceforth I sought occasion to absent myself from home more frequently. But, unfortunately, this could only happen once in three or four weeks, and yet, during this time, I became well acquainted with the new apostle and with the whole community. I attended their meetings upon every opportunity, and my social disposition made it quite delightful to communicate with others, and to hear them express sentiments which, up to this period, I had only ventured to entertain in secret. But I was not so wholly absorbed with my friends as not to perceive that few of them really felt the sense of those affecting words and emblems, and that they derived as little advantage from them, as they had formerly done from the symbolical language of the Church. Notwithstanding this, I continued my intercourse with them without allowing myself to be disturbed. I felt that it was not my mission to search and examine their hearts. Our intercourse was not without profit to me, and in conversing with them I dwelt with much force upon the sense and spirit of everything which, in matters of so much delicacy, mere words serve rather to disguise than to ex-

plain, and, in all other respects, I allowed every one to act in conformity with his own silent convictions.

These quiet periods of social pleasure were succeeded by a stormy season of public disputes and open contradictions. Great commotion ensued in the town and in the court, and I may even say, that great scandal was thereby occasioned. And now came the moment when our clergyman—that uncompromising opponent of the Herrnhuther Society—discovered to his deep, but, I must say, edifying humiliation, that the best and most exemplary portion of his congregation had been attracted by the novel doctrines. He was, at first, distressed beyond measure, forgot all moderation, and behaved in such a way that, had he afterwards desired it, he could not possibly retract. Angry discussion ensued, in which, fortunately, my name was never mentioned, inasmuch as I had only accidentally become a member of the community, and our zealous leader could not dispense with the assistance of my father and my friend in the performance of certain civic duties. To my secret delight, I therefore maintained my neutrality with my friends. It was painful to converse about certain feelings and objects of which they could not understand the hidden meaning, but it seemed to me altogether useless and even pernicious to contend with opponents about matters which could, with difficulty, be made intelligible even to our friends; for I soon saw that many amiable men who, in the present state of things, could not close their hearts to hatreds and ill will soon became absolutely unjust, and abandoned their practical duties for the maintenance and preservation of mere outward forms.

Although the worthy clergyman might be wrong in the present instance, and, notwithstanding the efforts of my friends to provoke me against him, I could not refuse him my sincere respect. I knew him well, and I could easily understand his mode of viewing such things. All men possess certain infirmities of disposition, but these weaknesses are more perceptible in persons of exalted station. We could wish that men who are so highly privileged should be free from the necessity of paying taxes and tributes. I honoured him as an excellent man, and hoped by the influence of silent neutrality, to effect a peace, or, at all events,

a truce. Perhaps my exertions might have proved finally successful, but God removed the difficulty by taking the clergyman to Himself, and all those persons shed tears over his grave who had lately contended with him about mere words. No one had ever doubted his justice or his fear of God.

I determined about this time to abandon this religious trifling, as the animosities which had lately arisen caused me to see things in a different point of view. Our uncle's plans in relation to my sister had been silently completed. He introduced to her a youth of rank and fortune as her future husband, and the rich dower which he proposed to settle upon her, afforded some evidence of the sincerity of his attachment. My father gladly gave his consent. My sister was free and not wholly inexperienced, and, as she evinced no reluctance to change her condition, the ceremony was appointed to take place at my uncle's castle; the family and friends were all invited, and they attended in the highest spirits.

For the first time in my life my entrance into a house excited my astonishment. It is true that I had often heard the highest encomiums passed upon my uncle's taste, as well as upon his Italian architect, his costly museum and extensive library, but as I had only compared these things with what I had already seen, the impression in my mind was but vague and indistinct. I was surprised, therefore, at the solemn and harmonious effect which was produced upon me as I entered my uncle's house, and which was deepened by the appearance of every room and corridor. In other places pomp and decoration had only distracted my attention, but here I felt that all my mental faculties were collected and concentrated together. And so all these preparations for festivals and ceremonials awakened within me a secret pleasure, from the dignity and splendour by which I was surrounded, and it seemed to me as incomprehensible that one individual could have invented and arranged all this, as that a number of persons could have combined to work together in so exalted a spirit. And yet the host and his family and dependents were perfectly natural in their conduct, there was no trace of stiffness or of empty ceremony to be observed.

The marriage was conducted in a delightful manner. We

were at first charmed and surprised by some exquisite and unexpected singing, and the clergyman performed the ceremony with all the earnestness of truth. I was standing close to Philo, but instead of congratulating me, he whispered to me with a deep sigh, "When I saw your sister give away her hand I felt as if I had been scalded with boiling water." "Why so?" I inquired. "I always experience this sensation," he replied, "upon witnessing a marriage ceremony." I smiled, but I have had occasion since to recollect his words.

The mirth of the company, amongst whom were many young people, was the more remarkable as in other respects the entertainment was serious and dignified. The furniture, the china, the plate, and ornaments were all in perfect harmony, and if the provider and the architect seemed to have emanated from the same school, it would appear in the present instance that the butler had derived some advantage from their instructions.

As we did not separate for several days, our intelligent host had provided, in various ways, for the entertainment of his guests. I did not upon the present occasion renew my experience of the wretched manner in which mixed company is generally entertained when they are thrown upon their own resources, or of the common and vapid amusements to which upon such occasions they have recourse, as if the dull guests were to be amused at the expense of the intelligent.

My uncle's arrangements were upon a different plan. He had appointed two or three stewards, if I may use the expression, to whom was entrusted the charge of providing amusement for the young people. They superintended the dances, the excursions, and the small games; and as the guests seemed partial to the open air, and did not fear the cold, the garden and the large hall had been allotted to them, in which some pavilions and galleries had been erected in a temporary manner, but in such noble and elegant proportions that they seemed to be constructed of stone and marble.

How rarely does a fête occur in which the host feels that it is incumbent upon him to provide his guests with every species of accommodation and entertainment. In the present instance the amusements had all been previously arranged. Hunting and card parties had been projected, agreeable promenades

laid out, and opportunities provided for confidential intercourse amongst the elder guests. And those who were accustomed to retire at an early hour to rest found their quarters situated at a distance from all noise and disturbance. By this fortunate management our habitation quite resembled a little world, and yet the castle was but small, and nothing but a perfect knowledge of its capabilities, coupled with the intelligent spirit of the owner, could have enabled him to furnish such admirable accommodation for so many guests.

If the appearance of a graceful person affords pleasure, so also does the aspect of a well conducted establishment, where the presence of a rational and intelligent mind is plainly perceptible. We experience a feeling of joy upon entering a cleanly house, even though in its structure and decorations there may be a total absence of taste, because it proves that a person is present whose mind, in at least one sense, is cultivated. But our pleasure is doubled when from a human dwelling we are addressed by the spirit of a higher culture, even though it be of a sensual nature.

I became strongly sensible of all this upon visiting my uncle's castle. I had become acquainted with art, both by reading and conversation. Philo moreover was fond of pictures, of which he had a large collection, and I had myself frequently practised drawing, but I had been too deeply engaged with my own emotions, to feel any great relish for pursuits which bore no relation to the one thing needful, and all things which I now beheld appeared to me in the light of worldly matters, calculated to distract my thoughts. But now, for the first time, I was led by the contemplation of outward objects, to cast a look upon my own condition, and to my great astonishment I learned to understand the difference between the natural melody of the nightingale's song, and the effect of an hallelujah composed for four voices, and chanted by the expressive organs of men.

I did not conceal my satisfaction from my uncle, upon making this discovery, as he was accustomed, when the rest of the company were fully engaged, to enter into conversation with me. He evinced great modesty in speaking of whatever he possessed or had produced, but he spoke with decision of the judgment with which the various objects had been selected

and arranged. I could not help observing that he addressed me with forbearance, seeming, according to his usual custom, to value his own merits far below their deserts.

"If we could only believe it possible," he said to me upon one occasion, "that the Creator of the world once assumed the nature of his creature, and in that form passed some time upon this earth, that creature must appear to us of infinite perfection, with whom our Maker could become so intimately united. Hence our idea of man cannot be inconsistent with our idea of God, and if we sometimes feel a want of this resemblance and a separation from Him, we are bound still more for this reason to investigate all the perfections of our nature, by which our resemblance with the Godhead may be confirmed, and we should not like allies of the wicked Spirit keep our eyes constantly fixed upon our nakedness and deficiencies, but rather seek out those perfections which establish our relationship with the Divinity."

I smiled, and observed in reply, "Do not make me blush, dear uncle, at your kindness in expressing your thoughts in my language. Your views upon this subject are to me of such importance, that I would prefer to hear them in your own language, and then, whatever I cannot appropriate to myself, I shall endeavour to translate."

He answered as follows: "I will continue to address you in my own style, without in the least degree altering my tone. The greatest merit of man consists in his ability to control events, and in preventing himself from being controlled by them. The whole world lies before us like a huge quarry before an architect, and he only deserves the name of man, who out of this accidental mass, can fashion with the greatest economy, ingenuity and durability, some form, the conception of which has arisen in his own mind. Every thing without us, and I might also say within us, is but elementary, but deep within us lies a creative power, which can fashion all that is destined to exist, and allows us neither to sleep nor to rest, until without us or within us this end has by some means been attained. You, my dear niece, have doubtless chosen the better part, you have sought to bring your moral being, your deep and lovely nature, into accordance with yourself and with the Highest, but nevertheless

we are not to be condemned for seeking to understand the whole race of reasonable men and to bring their powers into active harmony."

By conversations of this nature, we became gradually familiar with each other, and I entreated that he would in future address me without any kind of reserve. "Do not think," said my uncle to me, "that I flatter you, when I admire your style of thinking and of acting. I honour the man who has a distinct idea of his intentions, whose progress towards their attainment is unwearied, and who knows how to seize and to use the proper means for securing his end. It is a matter of minor importance how far that end is noble or contemptible, or how far it is deserving of praise or censure. Believe me, my love, that the greater part of misfortune and of all that we call evil in this world, arises from the indifference of men to their own real interests, and from their ignorance of the method by which they can be secured. In my opinion they resemble people, who have determined to erect a tower, but spend no more time or labour upon the foundation than would suffice to build a hut. If you, my dear friend, whose highest aim it has been to perfect your moral nature, instead of making the great sacrifices which have been required at your hands, had yielded to the allurements of your family, of a bridegroom or even of a husband, you would have lived in perpetual contradiction with yourself, and would never have enjoyed a peaceful moment."

I replied, "You have used the word sacrifice, and I have often inquired, whether in offering up a thing of small value in honour of an exalted purpose, as of a divinity, our heart has been thoroughly concerned therein, as it would be with those who willingly and cheerfully lead a beloved lamb to the altar to secure the health of a revered parent."

"Whether it be reason or feeling," he answered, "which induces us to surrender one thing for another, decision and perseverance are in my opinion the most valuable qualities of man. You cannot possess your goods and your money together, and he who wishes for the goods without having the heart to spend his money in their purchase, is as much to be pitied as the man who repents the purchase when the goods are in his hands. But I cannot blame men on this

account, they do not deserve our censure—they find themselves in a difficult and entangled situation from which they cannot easily escape. For this reason, in general, you will find fewer bad managers in the country than in towns, and fewer still in small towns than in large ones. How does this happen? Because man is born to fill a limited situation, he can understand objects which are simple, near and determinate, and he becomes accustomed to avail himself of every resource which he finds at hand, but let him depart from his usual course, and he is at once perplexed and confused, and this happens whether he is distracted by the multitude of objects or confounded by their magnitude and dignity. And he cannot fail to be unhappy when his exertions are directed towards an object to which he cannot attach himself by a regular devotion of his powers.

"It is certain," he continued, "that without earnestness nothing can be accomplished in the world, and yet even amongst men whom we consider cultivated, how little earnestness is to be found! They engage in works, and business, and pursue the arts and even pleasures, as it were, in self-defence; they live as they would read a collection of newspapers in order to get through them, and they remind me of the young Englishman at Rome, who one evening in company, related, with a feeling of self-satisfaction, that he had that day despatched six churches and two galleries. They are ambitious of learning and of knowing much, and they devote themselves chiefly to those things which are, to them, of the least importance, forgetting that hunger can never be appeased by snapping at the air. When I am first introduced to a man, I invariably inquire what is his employment—and with what perseverance he engages in it. Upon the answer, depends the interest which I take in him for life."

"My dear uncle," I replied, "you are too severe, and perhaps frequently withdraw your helping hand from many a good man, to whom you might be of service."

"Can I be blamed with any reason," he answered, "who have toiled so long in their behalf in vain? How great have been our sufferings in youth from men, who believe that they invite us to a delightful entertainment, when they introduce us into the company of the Danaids and Sysiphus?

Thank Heaven I have got rid of such people, and if unfortunately I meet one of them now, I take leave of him in the politest manner possible; as it is precisely from such individuals that we always hear the bitterest complaints about the entangled course of affairs in this world, the dryness of science, the levity of artists, the emptiness of poets, and other evils of that nature. They forget that neither they, nor persons of their way of thinking, would ever read a book, were it written upon their plan, that they are utter strangers to true poetry, and that even an excellent work of art could only obtain their approbation by means of prejudice. But let us leave this subject, as this is not a time to censure or to complain."

He directed my attention to the different paintings which ornamented the apartment. My attention was attracted by those of which the appearance was beautiful or the subject interesting. He watched me in silence for a short time and then observed, "Bestow a little attention upon the genius which has executed these works. Pious minds first delight in tracing the finger of God in the works of Nature, why should we not bestow some degree of attention upon the hand of his imitator?" He then pointed out to me some pictures of less pretension, took pains to explain that the history of art alone could render us capable of comprehending the value and dignity of works of art, that we should know the weary paths of mechanism and labour, along which the man of industry has toiled for centuries, before we can understand how it is possible for genius to move with airy freedom on the lofty pinnacle whose mere aspect is sufficient to render us giddy.

With this view he had formed a collection of beautiful works of art, and whilst he directed my attention to them, I could not avoid believing that I saw before me a correct type of moral culture. Upon expressing this thought to him, he observed, "You are quite right, and we may conclude from thence that it is not just exclusively to pursue our moral cultivation. For he whose mind is engaged in this study should, at the same time, endeavour to improve his finer sensibilities, that he may not incur the risk of falling from his moral height, enticed by the allurements of an ill-regulated fancy, or degrade his more noble na-

ture by feeling pleasure in tasteless trifles, or in something worse."

I had no idea that his allusions were intended for me, and yet I felt their justice when I remembered the worthlessness of many of the songs which had formerly afforded me delight, and recollected that many of the emblems which so completely suited my religious notions, would have found but little favour in my uncle's eyes.

During all this time, Philo had been employing himself in the library, to which he now introduced me. We admired the selection as well as the number of the books. They had been arranged upon a certain plan, and either furnished us with correct knowledge, or taught us right arrangement, providing us with proper materials for thought, or satisfying the wants of the mind.

My course of reading had been extensive. In certain departments of literature there was scarcely a book with which I was unacquainted, and on this account I felt great pleasure in taking a general survey of the state of learning, and of observing deficiencies where formerly I had only perceived perplexity and confusion.

At the same time, we made the acquaintance of a very interesting but unobtrusive personage. He was a physician and a naturalist, and appeared rather to be one of the Penates, than an inhabitant of the house. He pointed out the natural curiosities which, like the books, were enclosed in glass cases, ornamenting and ennobling the apartment, which they did not overcrowd. Here, I thought with pleasure upon the days of my youth, and reminded my father of several specimens which he had formerly brought to the bed-side of his sick child, when he had scarcely expected that I should survive. At the same time, the physician declared, in the course of a conversation to which we shall hereafter allude, that he very nearly agreed with me upon religious subjects. He highly praised my uncle for his toleration, and for his esteem of every thing that could promote the worth and unity of human nature, only requiring a similar concession from other men, and condemning nothing so thoroughly as individual ignorance or prejudice of mind.

From the day of my sister's nuptials, joy had sparkled in

my uncle's eyes, and he frequently conversed with me of his intentions towards her and her children. He possessed a handsome estate which he superintended himself, and which he hoped to bequeath to his nephew in the most favourable condition. He seemed to have some special views with respect to the small property upon which we resided. "I intend to bequeath it," he would say, "to some person who can understand how to appreciate and enjoy what it contains, and who can feel that a man of wealth and position, particularly in Germany, is required to shew a worthy example to others."

The greater part of the guests had by this time taken their departure. We were preparing to follow their example, and thought we had already witnessed the last scenes of our festivities, when we were surprised by a new attempt on my uncle's part to afford us entertainment. We had not been able to conceal from him the delight with which, upon the marriage of my sister, we had heard the chorus of men's voices without an instrumental accompaniment. We had frequently hinted that a repetition of this pleasure would be extremely agreeable, but he affected to pay no attention to our suggestions. Judge of our astonishment, therefore, when he said one evening, "The music of the dance is over, our young friends have taken their departure, and even the wedded pair themselves have assumed a more serious look than they bore some days ago. To separate, therefore, at such a moment, when, perhaps, we may never meet again, at least without some changes having occurred, imparts to our minds a feeling of solemnity, to which I cannot pay a deeper respect than by a repetition of that delicious music, which you have so frequently desired to hear."

He had in the interim increased the strength of his chorus, which had become more perfect by secret practice, and they now enchanted us with a succession of songs, arranged for four and eight voices, which, I might almost say, gave us a foretaste of heavenly bliss. I had previously been acquainted only with those sacred canticles which very devout persons are accustomed to sing with rather hoarse voices, when, like the wild birds, they fancy that they honour God when they are only pleasing themselves; or at times, I had listened to the

vain music of concerts, in which we are rather led to admire the talents of the singers, than to experience even a transient feeling of delight. Now, I was made sensible of the power of music, which, springing from the deepest sources of accomplished nature, is made to express the best and loftiest sentiments of man, by means of suitable and well-practised organs, which are combined in harmonious unison, and impress us with a sense of our resemblance to the Deity. The music consisted of sacred songs, written in the Latin language, and they shone like diamonds in the golden ring of polished worldly intercourse, and without pretending to afford edification, they elevated my feelings, and rendered me spiritually happy.

At our departure, we all received the most costly gifts. He presented me with the cross of my order, worked and ornamented in the most beautiful and artistic manner, and enamelled in an antique fashion. It was suspended from a large brilliant, by which it was attached to the chain, and which challenged comparison with the noblest jewel in a rich cabinet.

My sister accompanied her husband to their country seat, the remainder of the party returned to their abodes, and we felt, as far as our outward circumstances were concerned, as if we had resumed a very common-place existence. We had descended to the dull earth from an ærial fairy palace, and we found ourselves once more thrown upon our own resources.

The strange experiences which I had gained in that new circle of acquaintance left a pleasing impression upon my mind, but it did not long continue, notwithstanding the efforts of my uncle to encourage it, by sending me from time to time some of the most valuable specimens of his works of art, which, when I had sufficiently enjoyed, were exchanged for others.

I had been so long engaged with my own thoughts and in regulating the emotions of my heart and of my spirit, as well as in conversing upon such topics with persons of my own disposition, that I could not study a work of art for any length of time, without feeling its effect upon myself. I read a picture, or a copper-plate, as I could have done the letters of a book. Beautiful printing affords pleasure, but

who could read a book merely for the sake of the printing? so I wished that every pictured representation should instruct, affect, and improve me, and notwithstanding my uncle's letters in which he explained all his works of art, my style of thinking remained unaltered.

But the changes which soon took place in my own family, and various other circumstances, operated far more than my own natural disposition, in diverting my mind from such reflections, and even from considering my own condition. I had to suffer and to work far more severely than my infirm powers seemed able to endure.

My unmarried sister had been until now my chief support. Healthy, strong, and indescribably kind, she had undertaken the sole charge of the housekeeping, whilst upon me devolved the care of my father. A severe cold brought on an affection of the chest, and in three weeks she was lying in her coffin. Her death inflicted upon me a severe wound, the scar of which I cannot even yet bear to look upon.

I was confined to bed by sickness before her funeral took place. The old weakness of my chest returned, my cough increased alarmingly, and I lost my voice to such a degree that I could scarcely speak above a whisper.

The alarm and trouble of my married sister occasioned her premature confinement. My father feared that he was about to lose his children, together with all hopes of posterity, and the tears which he shed on this account increased my sorrow. I prayed to God that he would restore me to health, I implored Him to prolong my life, if only until my father's decease. I recovered to some extent, as I was able to discharge my duties, although the effort cost me considerable exertion.

My sister was once more in a condition to become a mother, and many cares fell to my lot which should naturally have devolved upon her. She was not perfectly happy with her husband, and it was considered desirable that this circumstance should be concealed from my father. I was occasionally called in to reconcile their differences, and the task was easy, as I possessed the confidence of my brother-in-law, and both he and my sister were really worthy persons, but instead of humouring, they sought to convince each other,

and from an extreme anxiety to live in perfect harmony, they never could agree.

My sister gave birth to a son, and my father's indisposition did not prevent him from paying her a visit. The sight of the infant rendered him cheerful and happy, and at the christening he seemed to be perfectly enraptured, and I may almost say that he resembled a genius with two faces. On the one side, he looked joyfully towards those regions, which were opening before him, and on the other, he viewed that new and hopeful career, which was to be pursued by his infant descendant. As we returned home, he never ceased to talk of the child, of its appearance, of its health, and of his own anxiety that the talents of this new citizen of the world should be properly cultivated. And even after our arrival at home, his thoughts upon this subject were continued. Some days after, he was attacked with fever, which manifested its symptoms by fits of shivering, accompanied by a languid heat, which commenced after he had taken his meals. But he held up, notwithstanding, drove out in the morning, and continued to discharge the duties of his office, until a serious and confirmed attack of illness at length confined him to his bed.

I shall never forget the composure of mind, the clearness and precision, with which he regulated his household affairs, and gave directions for his funeral, as if such things had merely concerned some other person.

His cheerfulness even assumed the appearance of actual joy, and he would ask me, "Where is all that apprehension of death, which formerly made me tremble? Why should I fear to die? I have a merciful God—the grave awakens no terrors—I shall enjoy eternal life."

It forms one of the most pleasing delights of my lonely hours, to recall the circumstances of his death, which ensued soon after, and I never can be persuaded, that the operation of a higher power was not at that time plainly discernible.

The decease of my beloved father altogether changed my course of life. I now enjoyed the most perfect freedom, though I had previously been accustomed to the strictest obedience and the most severe restraints. It seemed like the partaking of food after a long abstinence. Previously, I had seldom been absent from home for two hours together,

now I rarely spent a day in the house. My friends, whom I had permitted to visit me at intervals, wished to enjoy my uninterrupted society, and the desire was reciprocal. I received many invitations to dinner, and I was never absent from a promenade or party of pleasure. But when I had fairly pursued the whole round of entertainments, I learned that the unspeakable value of freedom consisted not in doing what we please, or all that circumstances allow, but in the power of doing at once and without restraint, whatever we consider right; and I was old enough now to learn this valuable lesson without paying for my experience.

I could not now deny myself the pleasure of renewing, and strengthening, my acquaintance, with the Society of Herrnhuthers, and I took the first opportunity to pay a visit to their establishment, which was in our neighbourhood. But I was disappointed in my anticipations. I was candid enough to acknowledge this, whereupon the fraternity sought to account for it, by explaining that the present small establishment must not be compared to a fully organised community. I was obliged to admit this excuse, though it seemed to me that the true spirit of the institution would show itself, as easily, in a small as in a large community.

One of their bishops, who was present, a favourite disciple of the founder himself, took considerable trouble with me. He spoke English perfectly, and as I understood that language slightly, he considered it to be a bond of union between us. But I was of a wholly different opinion, and his conversation did not interest me in the slightest degree. He had been a cutler, and was a native of Moravia, and his style of thinking betrayed his artizan origin. I was on far better terms with the Herr von L——, who had been a major in the French army. But I never could imitate the obedience which he showed to his superiors, and I felt perfectly humiliated when I saw the Major's wife and other distinguished ladies kiss the Bishop's hand. Soon after this a journey to Holland was proposed, and it was, doubtless, for my advantage that the project was abandoned.

My sister now gave birth to a daughter; when it was the

ladies' turn to rejoice, and to consider how the little creature should be educated. But my brother-in-law was not altogether satisfied when, in the following year, another daughter was born, as he would have preferred a family of boys, who might be able to assist him in the management of his estate.

My health was delicate, but, as I remained very quiet, I was wholly indifferent to whatever might occur. I did not fear death—I even wished to die—but I felt, during my hours of reflection, that God was granting me time for examining my soul, and drawing nearer to him. During many a sleepless night I experienced sensations, which I feel it impossible to describe.

It seemed to me, as if my soul had possessed the faculty of thinking independently of my body, and as if she looked upon the latter as a foreign substance, as we esteem a garment. She dwelt vividly upon times and circumstances which had long passed away, and from them she would endeavour to anticipate the future. Those days are fled, the future too will pass away, the body will decay like a vesture, but I—the well-known I—will remain.

Although this reflection is sublime and full of consolation, a worthy friend who had studied my disposition forbade me to encourage it. This was the physician whom I had met at my uncle's house, and who now perfectly understood my physical and moral organization. He taught me that such feelings, when they are entertained independently of outward objects, weaken and undermine the whole foundation of our being. "Activity," he would say, "is the destiny of man, and every interval of time in which he is obliged to take repose, should be dedicated to gaining a clearer knowledge of outward things, which may afterwards stimulate his industry."

This friend understood my propensity to regard the body as a mere external object, knew that I was well acquainted with my own constitution, as well as with the nature of my infirmity, and the proper remedies for its cure, and that by continually attending upon other people, I had become a sort of half physician; he, therefore, directed my attention from the human body, and its ailments and specifics, to other objects of creation. He introduced me into a species of

paradise, and if I may venture to pursue the allegory, he allowed me to enjoy a distant view of the Creator Himself, walking in the garden in the cool of the evening.

How gladly now did I see God in nature, when I carried Him so certainly in my heart, how full of interest were all the works of His hands, and how thankful did I feel that He had quickened me with the breath of His mouth.

We had still hopes that my sister would give birth to a son, an event which my brother-in-law anxiously desired, but which he did not live to see. The worthy man was killed by a fall from his horse, and my sister followed him soon after her confinement of a lovely boy. I could never behold her orphan child without being oppressed with grief. Many healthy people had been called away before me, though I had long been an invalid. Was I, perhaps, destined to see these hopeful blossoms blighted? I knew the world well enough to understand the many dangers, which surround an infant of high birth, and it appeared as if they had increased since the period of my youth. I felt that my own weak health incapacitated me from doing much for the improvement of the children, and I rejoiced, therefore, that my uncle had resolved, as might, indeed, have been expected, to attend zealously to the education of these amiable creatures, and, to say the truth, they were in every respect worthy of his care. They were well formed and handsome, and notwithstanding that they were unlike one another, they gave reasonable hopes of doing credit to their parents.

From the time that my kind friend the physician had directed my attention to the subject, I felt a pleasure in tracing family resemblances amongst the children and their relatives. My father had carefully preserved the portraits of his ancestors, and had caused the likenesses of himself and of his children, to be executed by very tolerable artists, nor had my mother, and her side of the house, been forgotten. We were accurately acquainted with the characters of the whole family, and as we frequently compared them together, we sought to detect in the children the same physical and moral resemblances. My sister's eldest son seemed to resemble his paternal grandfather, and a good representation of him was preserved in the collection of my uncle. The child,

like his ancestor, who had distinguished himself as a brave officer, delighted in military weapons, with which, whenever he paid me a visit, he was sure to be occupied. My father had a very complete armoury, and the youngster would not rest until I had provided him with a pair of pistols and a gun. In other respects his conduct and deportment had no trace of rudeness, on the contrary, he was rather mild and obliging.

The eldest daughter had won my entire love. This might have arisen from her close resemblance to myself, and because she was more attached to me, than any of her sisters. But I must acknowledge, that the more closely I observed her, the more she made me feel my deficiencies, and I could scarcely even look upon her, without a feeling of admiration, which nearly amounted to reverence. I had seldom known a nobler form, a more tranquil mind, or an industry so equable and uniform. During her existence, she was never for a single moment unemployed, and every pursuit in which she engaged, wore an air of dignity. Every thing seemed alike to her —provided she could do it in the proper place and at the proper time; and she could even remain unemployed without impatience, when there was no actual duty to fulfil. Such activity, without the necessity for occupation, I had never witnessed. Her conduct towards the suffering and the indigent was, from her earliest years, inimitable. I confess that I had never possessed the talent to make a business of charity, and though I was never niggardly towards the poor, but was rather too generous in proportion to my circumstances, thus purchasing my immunity as it were, yet I required to feel an attachment for a person before I could bestow my care upon him; but the conduct which I admired in my niece was directly the reverse. I never saw her distribute money to the poor, and whatever I gave to her for that purpose, she laid out in the purchase of some article of necessity. Never did she appear more amiable in my eyes, than when she was employed in examining my clothes and presses, she was sure to find something which I no longer required, and her greatest delight consisted in cutting up such articles as she could find, and preparing them for some poor ragged child.

The disposition of her sister was altogether different. She was more like her mother, promising from a very early age, to be elegant and beautiful, and bidding fair to realize such expectations. She was wholly occupied with her person, and she soon learned the art of dressing with taste, and of carrying herself with grace and elegance. I well recollect with what rapture she once surveyed herself in the glass, when she had persuaded me to adorn her hair with some beautiful pearls, which had once belonged to her mother, and which she had found amongst my ornaments.

In reflecting upon these different dispositions, it gave me pleasure to think how my property, upon my death, would be divided amongst the members of the family, and once more called into action. I saw, in fancy, the fowling piece of my father once more traversing the fields upon the shoulder of my nephew, and the game once more falling from his sporting bag; I saw my entire wardrobe upon the persons of neat little girls, as they came from church after the Easter confirmation, and my best garments applied to the decoration of some virtuous burgher maiden upon her bridal day. Nathalia took great delight in providing for children of this description, and for poor well-behaved girls, although, I should observe, she never evinced the least love, or necessity for dependence upon any visible or invisible Being, as I had done so strongly during my youth. And when I reflected, that upon the same day, my youngest niece would wear my jewels and my pearls at court, I could contemplate with peace, that my possessions, as well as my body, would be restored to the elements.

The children grew up, and to my great joy they are now handsome and talented creatures. I am quite content that my uncle should keep them separated from me, and I seldom see them either in the neighbourhood or in the town.

A man of somewhat singular character, who passes for a French clergyman, though no one seems to be accurately acquainted with his history, has taken them under his charge. They have been brought up in different places and their abode is often changed.

At first I could not comprehend the object of this system of education, until my friend the physician at length in-

formed me, that my uncle had been convinced by the Abbé that, to render education effectual, the wishes and the disposition of the pupil should be studied—that when these are understood, measures should be taken by which such wishes may be gratified, in order that if a mistake in the selection have been made, the error may be in time retrieved, and that when the pupil has discovered the pursuit for which he is adapted, he may follow it with earnestness, with a view to his own improvement. I heartily wish that this unusual plan may prosper; with good dispositions it may possibly succeed.

But there is one thing in this system of which I cannot approve. They endeavour to withdraw the children from a study of themselves, and from intercourse with their Invisible, but only true, friend. I am often distressed that my uncle should consider my society as dangerous to the children. Thus, in practice, no man is tolerant; for even those who assert most loudly, that they permit every one to act as he pleases, carefully exclude the interference of those who do not agree with them in opinion.

This effort, to keep me separated from the children, troubles me the more in proportion as I am convinced of the sincerity of my faith. For why should not its origin be divine, its object real, when in practice it is so effectual? For, as practical things alone convince us of our existence, why should we not be satisfied with the same proof, to demonstrate the influence of that Being whose hand dispenses every blessing.

That my progress is ever in advance, and that I never retrograde—that my conduct becomes daily more conformable to the ideas which I have formed of perfection—that in spite of my bodily infirmities, which exclude me from so many opportunities of doing good—I feel a growing inclination to discharge my duty—can all this be explained by the principles of mere human nature whose corruption I have so clearly seen? In my opinion, decidedly not.

I can scarcely remember a command—I have never known a law—an impulse leads me and always conducts me right—I freely pursue my own disposition, and I am a stranger alike to restraint and to remorse. Thank God! I know to

whom I am indebted for this happiness, and that I can contemplate my advantages with humility. I shall never incur the danger of being too proud of my own power and ability, for I well know, that but for the restraining hand of a higher power, what a hideous monster would be born and nourished in every human bosom.

BOOK VII.

CHAPTER I.

THE spring had already commenced in all its beauty; a storm which had been threatening all day, broke furiously over the hills, the rain deluged the country at a distauce from us, and finally the sun shone forth in full brilliancy, and the dark horizon was illuminated by a glorious rainbow. Wilhelm was riding in the direction of the spot in which it appeared, and the sight depressed his spirits. "Alas!" he thought within himself, "and are the fairest hues of life only to be seen upon a dark background? And must rain fall in order that we may feel enchanted? It matters not whether the day be bright or gloomy, if our feelings are unmoved, and what can move us more than the silent hope that the innate wishes of our heart shall not for ever remain without an object? We are moved by the recital of a famous action, or by the sight of a noble deed, we feel then as if we were not wholly in a foreign land, we believe that we are nearer to that home, towards which all our best and fondest wishes are so earnestly bent."

In the mean time a pedestrian had overtaken him, and walking rapidly, kept pace with Wilhelm's horse. After a few ordinary observations, he said, "If I mistake not, we have met before."

"I remember you perfectly," replied Wilhelm, "did we not once enjoy a pleasant sail together?"

"Quite right," observed the stranger.

Wilhelm looked at him attentively and after a short pause observed, "I do not well understand the change which has taken place in you, but formerly you seemed to me to be a Lutheran clergyman, now I should take you for a Catholic priest."

"You are not wrong," replied the stranger, as he took off his hat, and showed his tonsure. "But what has become of your companions? Did you continue long together?"

"Longer than was right, and when I reflect upon the time which I spent in their society, it seems as if I were gazing into an unfathomable void, no trace of it remains."

"You mistake," observed the stranger, "every thing that happens to us leaves some memorial behind, which it is dangerous for us to examine too closely. We either grow proud and negligent, or else become dispirited and depressed, and both these conditions of mind are injurious. The safest mode of acting is to employ ourselves with our nearest duty, and at present," he added, with a smile, "that consists in hastening to our quarters."

Wilhelm inquired how far Lothario's house was distant from them? His companion informed him that it lay behind the hill. "Perhaps we may meet there," he continued, "as I have some business to transact in the neighbourhood. Farewell!" and with these words he ascended a steep foot path, which seemed to lead by a shorter way across the mountain.

"Truly, he is right," said Wilhelm, as he proceeded, "we should employ ourselves with our nearest duty, and for the present there is nothing nearer to me, than the sad commission which I have to execute. Let me see whether I quite recollect the speech, which I have composed, to confound Aurelia's cruel friend."

He commenced to repeat his oration, he did not miss a syllable, and the faithfulness of his memory served to augment his passion and his courage. Aurelia's sufferings, and the circumstances attending her death, were vividly present to his soul.

"Spirit of my friend!" he exclaimed, "hover round me now, and if possible, convey to me some intimation that thou art satisfied and appeased!" Amid these soliloquies and reflections, he had gained the summit of the hill, and he saw at the bottom of the descent, upon the other side, a remarkable-looking house, which he at once concluded was Lothario's abode. An old irregular castle, ornamented with turrets and gabled roofs, seemed to have formed the original building. It was increased by some new and irregular

additions which had been made to the old structure, or were connected with it, by means of galleries and covered passages. Outward symmetry and architectural beauty had been wholly sacrificed to the claims of convenience. There was no trace of wall or trench, and no appearance of avenue or artificial pleasure grounds. A fruit and vegetable garden had been formed close to the buildings, and some small plots of land had been dedicated to similar uses in the intervening space. A busy village lay at a little distance, and gardens and fields in the highest state of cultivation were every where visible.

Buried in his own deep thoughts, Wilhelm rode forward, little thinking of the sights around him; and leaving his horse at an inn, it was not without emotion that he hastened to the castle.

An old servant received him at the entrance, who informed him respectfully, that he could scarcely expect to be admitted to an interview with his Lordship, as the latter had many letters to write, and had already denied himself to several visitors. But upon Wilhelm's insisting, the servant consented to announce him. He returned, and introduced Wilhelm into a large and antiquated hall, where he requested him to wait, as his master might perhaps be detained for a considerable time. Wilhelm walked restlessly up and down the apartment, and amused himself with examining the portraits of the knights and ladies, which adorned the walls. He commenced his speech once more, and it seemed to be quite in place amongst the antique dresses and suits of armour which he saw around him. Upon hearing the slightest noise, he placed himself in an attitude to meet his antagonist with dignity, intending first to deliver his letter, and then to encounter him with the weapons of reproach.

Several times he was disappointed, and he was becoming angry and impatient, when at length a handsome man, in boots and wearing a fashionably made coat, entered the apartment by a side door. "What good news do you bring?" he inquired of Wilhelm in a friendly tone: "Pardon me for having made you wait."

Whilst he was speaking, he continued folding up a paper, which he held in his hand. With some embarrassment, Wilhelm gave him Aurelia's letter, saying, "I bring you

here the last words of a friend, which you cannot read without emotion."

Lothario took the letter and returned to his apartment, and Wilhelm could observe, through the open door, that he sealed and directed some other letters before he opened Aurelia's. He seemed to peruse it several times, and though Wilhelm thought that his pathetic speech would but ill accord with his cool reception, he summoned up courage and advanced to the door-way, and was on the point of commencing his oration, when a tapestry door of the cabinet opened, and the clergyman made his appearance.

"I have received the most extraordinary communication in the world," observed Lothario. "Pardon me," he continued, as he turned towards Wilhelm, "if I am not able for the moment to prolong our interview. But you must remain here to-night, and, Abbé, you will take care that our guest wants for nothing."

So saying, he bowed to Wilhelm. The clergyman took Wilhelm by the hand, who followed him reluctantly.

Silently they took their course together, along some curious passages, till at length they reached a handsome chamber, to which the clergyman introduced him, and then retired without further apology. Presently a cheerful youth made his appearance, who announced himself to Wilhelm as his servant. He brought up the supper, and during his attendance, he had much to say about the regulations of the house, the breakfasts, the dinners, the work, and the amusements, mingling the whole with the warmest praises of Lothario.

But, notwithstanding the entertainment which the boy afforded, Wilhelm was anxious for his departure. He wished to be alone, as in the situation in which he found himself, he was perplexed and ill at ease. He upbraided himself for having so imperfectly fulfilled his intentions, and for having only half performed his commission. He determined therefore to supply the deficiency upon the following morning, but he soon perceived that Lothario's presence would be sure to effect an alteration in his feelings. The whole house appeared to him so mysterious that he could not understand it. He resolved, therefore, to retire for the night, and accordingly he opened his travelling bag to prepare his things.

In taking out his night dress, he found the Ghost's veil, which Mignon had packed up, together with his clothes. The sight of this increased his sadness. "Fly! youth, fly!" he exclaimed, "What can those mysterious words mean? Why should I fly, and whither? Far better had the Ghost commanded me to reflect upon my condition." He examined the pictures which were hanging about the chamber, he surveyed most of them with indifference, but at length his attention was attracted by the engraving of a shipwreck. A father and his beautiful daughters were struggling for life with the overwhelming waves. One of these ladies resembled his favourite Amazon, an inexpressible feeling of compassion seized Wilhelm, he could not resist the emotions of his heart, tears streamed from his eyes, and he did not resume his composure until he was overcome by sleep.

Strange dreams visited him towards morning. He thought he was wandering in a garden, to which he had often resorted in youth, and that he once more saw with delight, the walks, parterres, and beds of flowers, with which he had been so familiar. Mariana met him, and he spoke to her with a voice full of love and without recalling any of their by-gone troubles. His father joined them soon afterwards, he wore his morning dress, and in a confidential tone, wholly unlike his usual manner, he requested Wilhelm to bring two chairs into the garden, and taking Mariana by the hand, he led her to a summer house.

Wilhelm hastened to obey, but found the garden-house quite empty, but he saw Aurelia standing at an opposite window. He approached to address her, but she remained immoveable, and though he placed himself beside her, he could not see her face. He looked out of the window into a strange garden, where he saw a number of persons collected together, some of whom he immediately recognized. Madame Melina was sitting under a tree, playing with a rose which she held in her hand. Laertes was standing at her side, counting money from one hand into the other. Mignon and Felix were lying on the grass, the former turned upon her back, the latter prostrate on his face. Philina now appeared, and clapped her hands over the children. Mignon took no notice, but Felix leaped up and ran away from Philina. At first he laughed as

Philina pursued him, but soon afterwards he uttered a piercing scream, when he saw the old Harper following him slowly with huge strides. The child was running towards a pond. Wilhelm endeavoured to overtake him, but too late, the child had fallen into the water! Wilhelm stood as if he had been rooted to the earth. And now he beheld the beautiful Amazon standing on the other side of the pond. She stretched her right hand to little Felix, and went towards the bank. The child floated through the water in the direction of her finger, and following her as she changed her course, she at length extended her hand to him and drew him out. Upon Wilhelm's approach, the boy appeared to be in flames, and drops of fire were falling from him in all directions. Wilhelm was alarmed, but the Amazon took a white veil from her head, and enveloped him with it. The fire was at once extinguished, but upon withdrawing the veil, two children sprang from under it, and commenced sporting about, while Wilhelm, hand in hand with the Amazon, sauntered through the garden. At a distance he saw Mariana and his father walking under an alley of trees which seemed to surround the whole garden. He turned towards them with his beautiful companion, when suddenly the fair-haired Friedrich crossed their path, and detained them with his laughter and a thousand droll tricks. But when they insisted on proceeding, Friedrich left them, and ran towards the distant pair. They seemed to fly, but Wilhelm hastened his pursuit until at length he saw them wholly disappear at the bottom of the alley. The voice of nature and of affection appealed to him to hasten to their assistance, but the hand of the Amazon held him back. How willingly did he submit to the restraint! With these mixed and confused sensations he awoke, and found his chamber illuminated by the beams of the morning sun.

CHAPTER II.

WILHELM was summoned to breakfast by his attendant; he found the Abbé already in the apartment; Lothario, it was said, was gone out on horseback. The Abbé spoke but little, and seemed to be absorbed in thought: he asked some questions about Aurelia's death, and listened with much sympathy to Wilhelm's narrative. "Alas!" he exclaimed, "the man who thoroughly understands the endless operations of nature and art, which are required to form a cultivated human being, or who takes a deep interest in the education of his fellow-men, may well despair when he sees how madly people pursue their own ruin, or expose themselves to thoughtless or intentional danger. When I reflect upon this, life appears to me a gift of such uncertain value, that I could almost praise the man who holds it in but small esteem."

He had scarcely said this, when the door was burst violently open, and a young lady rushed into the apartment, pushing back the old servant who endeavoured to impede her. She ran towards the Abbé, and as he held her arm, her sobs and tears scarcely allowed her to utter a few exclamations. "Where is he? What have you done with him? It is a shameful piece of treachery. Confess it. I know it all. I will follow him. I know where he is."

"Compose yourself, my child," said the Abbé, with assumed calmness of manner. "Return to your chamber. You shall hear every thing, but you must be in a state to listen to the account I have to tell." He offered her his hand as if he would lead her away, but she exclaimed, "No! I will not return to my room. I hate the apartment where you have kept me so long a prisoner! But I know what has happened. The Colonel has challenged him. He is gone to meet his antagonist, and, perhaps, before this time——I thought once or twice that I heard the sound of shots. Order the carriage, and come with me, or I will alarm the whole house, and even the village, with my screams."

She rushed to the window, bathed in a flood of tears, whilst the Abbé sought to restrain her, and to calm her agitation.

He heard the approach of a carriage, and threw up the window. "He is dead," she cried, "they are carrying him in." "He is descending from the carriage," replied the Abbé, "you perceive he lives." "He is wounded," she added wildly, "otherwise he would have returned on horseback! They are carrying him in,—the wound is dangerous."

She ran to the door, and down the stairs. The Abbé hastened after her, and Wilhelm joined in the pursuit. He saw the lady meet her lover as he entered the house.

Lothario leaned upon his companion, in whom Wilhelm now recognized his old friend Jarno. He then addressed the afflicted maiden in kind and consoling terms, and placing his hand upon her shoulder, he slowly ascended the stairs, and saluting Wilhelm, he was conducted to his own apartment.

Jarno returned in a few minutes, and going up to Wilhelm, said, "It seems that you are destined to meet with a theatre and actors every where. We are, at this very moment, engaged in a drama, which is not of the pleasantest description."

"I am glad to meet with you," answered Wilhelm, "at this strange moment; I am astonished and terrified, and your presence restores my peace and composure—I am already tranquil. But tell me,—is there any real danger? Is the Baron severely wounded?"

"I believe not," replied Jarno.

In a short time a young surgeon came from Lothario's apartment.

"Well, what is your report?" inquired Jarno.

"It is a serious business," answered the other, as he replaced several surgical instruments in his leathern case.

Wilhelm was struck by the appearance of the ribbon which was attached to the surgical case—he thought he had seen it before. The colours were bright, and formed a lively contrast, and the gold and silver threads, in which certain figures were embroidered, rendered it easy to distinguish this ribbon from any other. Wilhelm felt certain that it was the surgical case of the professional man who had attended him in the wood, and the hope of once more finding some trace of his lovely Amazon, struck like a flame into his inmost soul.

"Where does that surgical case come from?" he inquired,

"who was its previous owner, I implore of you to tell me?" "I purchased it at an auction," answered the stranger, "and it did not concern me to inquire about its previous owner." So saying, he went away, whereupon Jarno added, "the surgeon has not spoken one word of truth." "Then he did not purchase that case," said Wilhelm. "Not at all," replied Jarno, "neither should we be apprehensive about Lothario."

Wilhelm was lost in a thousand reflections. Jarno asked what he had been doing lately; whereupon the former gave him an outline of his proceedings, and when, at length he adverted to Aurelia's death, Jarno exclaimed, "Wonderful, indeed, most wonderful."

The Abbé now came from Lothario's apartment, and having desired Jarno to take his place, he addressed himself to Wilhelm. "The Baron," he said, "desires me to request that you will remain here for a few days, to share his hospitality, and to contribute to his comfort, under present circumstances. If you require to acquaint your friends with your intention, your letter shall be forwarded without delay, and, in the meantime, that you may understand the circumstance which has occurred, and of which you have been partly an eye-witness, I must inform you of something, which is not altogether a secret. The Baron has had a passing adventure with a lady, which has attracted unusual attention, as the latter, having succeeded in carrying him off from a rival, became too vain of her triumph. But he soon wearied of her society and forsook her; but, as she was a person of violent temper, she did not submit patiently to her disappointment. At length they came to an open rupture at a ball. She asserted that she had been grievously insulted, and thirsted for revenge. But she could procure no knight to espouse her cause; until, at length, her husband, from whom she has long been separated, heard of the affair and challenged the Baron. He has this day wounded him; but, I have been informed, that the Colonel himself has sustained a serious injury."

From this time, Wilhelm was treated as if he had belonged to the family.

CHAPTER III.

They entertained the wounded Lothario by reading to him, and Wilhelm gladly assisted in the performance of this little service. Lydia never left his bed-side, her care for him absorbed her whole attention, but, as his mind appeared to be engaged to-day, he requested that they would read no farther.

"I feel to-day most sensibly," he observed, "in what a foolish manner we lose our time. How many things have I undertaken and intended, which I have never completed. How culpably have I delayed the execution of my best purposes. I have been just reading over the plan which I had formed for the improvement of my estates, and I must confess, that I am on this account especially glad that the bullet did not take a deadlier path."

Lydia looked at him tenderly, with her eyes suffused with tears, as if she would have inquired whether she herself and his other friends could not lay claim to any interest in his desire to live. Jarno observed, "Alterations, such as you design, require to be minutely examined, before they are finally adopted."

"Tedious reflections," said Lothario, "generally prove that we do not accurately see the point, which requires our decision—hasty proceedings, for the most part, shew that we do not properly understand it. I perceive, for example, very clearly that, in many respects, I cannot dispense with the services of my dependants, in the management of my estates, and that I must rigidly exact the performance of certain duties, bnt I observe, at the same time, that there are other things, which, though advantageous to me, are not indispensable, in which favourable alterations might be made. We do not always lose an advantage when we dispense with it. Do I not derive more benefit from my property than my father did? And ought I alone to enjoy this increasing advantage? Should I deny to those who labour for me some share in the profit, which I derive from expanded knowledge and improving times?"

"It is the same with all men," cried Jarno, "and I never blame myself, when I detect a selfish spirit in my conduct.

Every man loves to see himself surrounded by abundance—in which he may riot at pleasure—and he seldom thinks his money properly employed, when he does not spend it with his own hands."

"O, yes," replied Wilhelm, "we could save much of our capital, if we laid out our interest more prudently."

"The only observation which I wish to make," said Jarno, "the only advice which I have to offer, in opposition to those improvements which you contemplate, and which for a time, at least, must be unprofitable to you, is that you are in debt, and that the payment presses. I, therefore, recommend you to postpone your plan, till you are fully free."

"And, in the interim, a bullet or an accidental tile may annihilate for ever the result of a whole life's activity. O! my friend," continued Lothario, "it is the capital fault of all cultivated men, that they devote their whole energies to the carrying out of a mere idea, and seldom or never, to the realisation of some practical good. Why have I incurred debts? Why have I quarrelled with my uncle, and left my sisters so long dependent upon themselves? For the gratification of a mere idea. I fancied that I should lead an active life in America—that, across the seas, my existence might become necessary and useful. Unless the task which I had to accomplish were surrounded by danger, I considered it trivial and unimportant. But how different do all things now appear to me, when I recognize the duty which is immediate, as that alone which possesses any worth or value."

"I well remember the letter," said Jarno, "which you transmitted to us across the Channel. You wrote as follows:—'I will return, and in my own house, upon my own property, among my own people, I will say, Here or nowhere is America.'"

"Yes, my friend, and I repeat the same expression, and I censure myself that I am not as industrious here as I was there. For a certain uniform and continuous mode of life, nothing more than judgment is required, and we need seek for nothing more. We then cease to observe the extraordinary actions which each unimportant day requires from us, or when we do observe them, we find a thousand excuses for their non-performance. A man of understanding is valuable to his own interests, but of little value to general welfare."

"We must not bear too hard upon judgment and understanding," answered Jarno, "and we must admit that extraordinary actions are generally foolish."

"I agree with you, and for this reason—that extraordinary things are seldom done in conformity with a proper plan. My brother-in-law, intends, as far as he is able, to devote his whole fortune to the Society of Herrnhuthers, and he fancies that he will thereby save his soul—had he sacrificed only a small portion of his fortune, he would have rendered many individuals happy, and have secured for himself a heaven upon earth. The sacrifices which we make are seldom active—we abandon what we give away—we renounce our property from motives of despair, and not from resolution. I must confess that to-day, the image of the Count is perpetually before my eyes, and I have resolved to do, from motives of conviction, what a morbid delusion is exacting from him. I will not wait for the moment of recovery from sickness. Here are the necessary papers, they require only to be copied out fairly. Take a lawyer with you—our guest will also contribute his assistance. You know my intentions fully; and now, whether I recover or die, I shall adhere to my resolution, and exclaim, 'Here, or nowhere, is the Community of Herrnhuthers!'"

When Lydia heard her friend speak of dying, she flung herself down before the bed, seized his arm, and wept bitterly. The surgeon now entered, upon which Jarno handed the papers to Wilhelm, and motioned to Lydia to retire.

"For heaven's sake," cried Wilhelm, as soon as they were alone, "what do you say about the Count? What is the name of the Count who, you say, speaks of joining the Society of Herrnhuthers?"

"One whom you are well acquainted with," answered Jarno: "You are the apparition that has driven him to seek refuge in a life of piety. You are the culprit who has reduced his pretty wife to such a state, that she is resolved to accompany him."

"And she is Lothario's sister!" cried Wilhelm.

"No other."

"And Lothario knows——"

"Everything."

"O! let me begone," cried Wilhelm. "How can I now appear before him? What will he say?"

"That no man should ever cast a stone at his neighbour; that when one composes long speeches to make another person blush, he should recite them before a looking glass."

"Then you know the whole transaction."

"And much besides," replied Jarno, with a smile. "But upon this occasion," he continued, "I shall not let you off so easily as before, and now you have nothing to fear from my recruiting money. I have ceased to be a soldier, though even as a member of that profession, your opinion of me might have been more charitable. Many changes have occurred since we met each other last. In consequence of the death of my Prince, my only friend and benefactor, I have retired from the world, and from all earthly affairs. It was always my delight to promote what was reasonable, to express my opinion freely about despicable things, and the world had never much to fear from my restless head or from my unlicensed tongue. The common herd dread a sound understanding, whereas they ought to tremble at stupidity, if they could but know what is really fearful, but the former is inconvenient and must be thrust aside, the latter is pernicious and therefore may remain. But be it so. I must live, and you shall hear my plans presently. You shall share in them if you please. But tell me first, how have you fared? I can see and feel that you are much changed. What has become of your old fancy to produce something beautiful and good in a society of gipsies?"

"I have been punished sufficiently," replied Wilhelm. "Do not inquire whence I come or whither I am going? Persons talk about the stage, but only those who have trod the boards, can form any proper idea of its evils. It is impossible to describe how completely actors are ignorant of themselves, how boundless are their pretensions, and how thoughtlessly they pursue their avocations. Each would not only be the first, but the sole hero, he endeavours to exclude all competitors, and does not see that even with their assistance, he can hardly accomplish anything important. Each one fancies that he is original, and in spite of

his appetite for novelty, he can scarcely quit the old and well-remembered beaten track. With what untiring zeal do they oppose each other; and they are often kept together by the narrowest views of interest—by the most contemptible feeling of self-love. They never dream of rendering mutual favours; and secret calumny and shameful slander keep incessant jealousy alive amongst them. They are either dissipated or foolish in their habits. They all claim the most exalted respect, and they are keenly apprehensive of the slightest censure. 'All that he knew before!' he will tell you. And why then has he followed the very opposite course? Ever in want and ever unconfiding, it would seem that they never feared anything so much as reason and good taste, and never sought for anything so earnestly as to preserve the majesty of their own self-will."

Wilhelm paused, for a moment, to draw breath, intending to continue his observations, but an immoderate fit of laughter from Jarno made him pause. "Poor actors!" exclaimed the latter, as he threw himself into a chair, and continued to laugh heartily, "the poor kind souls! do you know, my friend, that, in describing the stage, you have drawn a veritable picture of the world, and that every condition of life will supply you with characters and actors enough to suit your severe pencil. Pardon me! but I cannot refrain from laughing that you should suppose all those amiable qualities to be confined to the stage alone."

Wilhelm said nothing, but Jarno's loud and inopportune laughter had really offended him. "You must avow your hatred of mankind," he continued, "when you assert that the failings which you have described are general, and it proves your ignorance of the world, that you attach such importance to those theatrical infirmities. I am always ready to excuse an actor for those faults, which spring from self-deception and a desire to please, for he must fail if he does not appear to be something in his own estimation and in the eyes of others. The whole object of his life is to seem, and he ought to prize his momentary applause at a high rate as he never receives any other reward. He must endeavour to attract notice, as that is the end of his existence."

"You must permit me," said Wilhelm, "at least to smile at your observations. I could never have supposed you capable of so much mercy and toleration."

"I repeat that I have expressed my perfect and deliberate conviction. In the actor, I can pardon every human fault, but I cannot excuse mankind when they commit an actor's errors. Do not ask my opinion of mankind. My strain of woe would probably be more pitiful than yours."

The surgeon now made his appearance, and to the inquiry, "How his patient felt?" he replied, with an air of easy cheerfulness, "he is going on very well, and I have reason to hope that he will soon be quite restored." He hastened away speedily, without waiting for Wilhelm's farther questions, as the latter was on the point of making some pressing and earnest inquiries about the surgical case. His anxiety to learn something more about his Amazon, caused him now to confide in Jarno, he made him acquainted with all the facts and implored his assistance. "You already know so much," he said, "that you ought not to remain ignorant of this."

Jarno reflected for an instant, and then turning to Wilhelm, observed, "Be calm, say nothing of this affair, and I doubt not we shall come upon the track of your fair friend. At the present moment I am troubled about Lothario's state—it is a dangerous business, and I am convinced of this, by the friendly manner and consoling words of the surgeon. I should like to send Lydia away, for she can render no assistance here, but I do not well know how to effect my object. I expect to have an interview with an old physician this evening, and we shall discuss the matter together."

CHAPTER IV.

The physician came. He was the good, old, little doctor whose acquaintance we have already made, and to whom we are indebted for the perusal of the interesting manuscript. His first step was to visit the wounded man, and he appeared by no means satisfied with his condition.

He afterwards held a long conference with Jarno, but they mentioned nothing of its nature, when they sat down to supper in the evening.

Wilhelm welcomed him in the kindest manner, and made inquiries about the Harper. "We still entertain some hopes of restoring the poor creature to his reason," replied the physician. "He must have formed a sad episode in your strange life," observed Jarno. "What is the matter with him? I should like to know his story."

After he had satisfied Jarno's curiosity, the physician continued, "I have never seen a person in so strange a state. For many years he has not taken the smallest interest in external things, or paid the least attention to them. Wrapped up in his own contemplations, he has thought of nothing but his own hollow empty self, into which he has looked as into a profound abyss. How affecting has it been, when he has spoken to us of his melancholy condition. 'I see nothing before me, and nothing behind me,' he would say, 'but endless night, where I am wrapt in the most dreary solitude; I have no feeling but the consciousness of guilt, which never ceases to appear before me like a distant, shapeless spirit, and yet I behold no height, no depth, no forwards, no backwards. O! no words can express my dreary changeless state. Often in the anguish of this perpetual monotony, I exclaim, "For ever! for ever!" and these wonderful and incomprehensible words become plain and clear to the darkness of my understanding. No ray of a Deity illumines my mental night. I pour all my tears to myself and for myself. Nothing is more hateful to me than friendship and love, for nothing else awakens within me a wish that these apparitions may be real. But both these spirits have risen from the abyss to torment me, and to rob me of the precious consciousness of my terrible existence.'"

"You should hear him speak," continued the physician, "when, in confidential moments, he endeavours thus to alleviate his heart. I have often listened to him with the deepest emotion. When any sorrow compels him to confess for an instant—that time flies—he seems lost in astonishment, and attributes the change to the things by which he is surrounded, considering it as an appearance of appearances.

One night he sang a song about his own grey hairs and we all sat round him and wept."

"Procure it for me!" cried Wilhelm. "Have you never thought of tracing the origin of what he calls his crime, and of thus accounting for his strange dress, and his singular conduct at the fire, as well as his behaviour towards the child?"

"We can do no more than form conjectures upon this subject; to make direct inquiries about such a matter would be in violation of our principles. Conceiving him to be a Catholic, we thought he might obtain some relief from confession, but he shudders whenever we attempt to introduce a priest to him. But, that your desire to learn something about him, may not remain wholly unsatisfied, I may inform you of our suspicions. We are of opinion that in his youth he was a priest, and hence, perhaps, arises his fancy for dressing in a long cloak and for wearing a beard. He appears to have been for many years a stranger to the joys of love. We think that subsequently a liaison, formed with some near relation, and her consequent death, after she had become a mother, may have turned his brain.

"His greatest delusion consists in believing that he causes misfortune every where, and that his death will be occasioned by some innocent boy. He was afraid of Mignon, when he first became acquainted with her, in ignorance that she was a girl; then Felix terrified him, and as, in spite of his unhappiness he dearly loves his life, this may have occasioned his dislike to the child."

"Have you any hopes of his recovery?" asked Wilhelm.

"He makes but slow progress," replied the physician, "but he does not, at all events, become worse. He pursues his wonted amusements, and we have accustomed him of late to read the newspapers, and he looks for them with the greatest anxiety."

"I am curious to know something of his songs," observed Jarno.

"I can undertake to procure several of them for you," replied the physician. "The eldest son of our clergyman, who frequently copies out his father's sermons, has, without the Harper's knowledge, written down several stanzas of

his songs, and we have, from time to time, arranged them in some sort of order."

On the following morning, Jarno met Wilhelm, and said, "You must do us a favour. It becomes necessary that Lydia should be removed. Her strong affection for the Baron, which, I may say, amounts to unreasonable love and passion, impedes his recovery. He requires rest and tranquillity, and with his healthy constitution, his wound cannot of itself be considered dangerous. But you have seen how Lydia distresses him with her anxieties, her terrors, and her incessant tears; and, moreover—But enough of this," he added with a smile, after a moment's pause, "our physician insists that she must leave him for a time. We have persuaded her that a lady, one of her most intimate friends, wishes to see her, and expects a visit from her. She has just consented to take a drive to her lawyer's, who lives about two leagues distant from us. He is prepared to see her: he will express his regret that Fraülein Theresa should have just left his house, but will seem to think that she may be overtaken. Lydia will thereupon set out after her, and if fortune favours us, she will be driven from place to place. Should she insist at length upon returning, she must not be opposed, but the night will soon prove our friend. The coachman is a clever fellow, and we must furnish him with proper instructions. You, Wilhelm, must consent to accompany her upon this journey, during which, you can entertain her, and direct the entire proceedings."

"This is a strange and somewhat hazardous commission for me to undertake," replied Wilhelm. "I know how painful is the sight of injured love, and am I to be employed for the purpose? It will be the first time that I have deceived any person in this manner, and I have always thought that if we begin deceiving, even for good and beneficial purposes, we may very easily go too far."

"But can we educate children in any other manner?" inquired Jarno.

"It may be a proper course to follow with children," replied Wilhelm, "which our affection for them may excuse; but it may be dangerous to practise it with our equals, as our hearts may not then teach us proper forbearance. But do not suppose," he added, after a short pause, "that I in-

tend, on this account, to decline the task. The honour I entertain for your judgment, my feelings of attachment for your noble friend, and my anxiety to contribute to his recovery, by every means in my power, may easily render me forgetful of myself. It is not enough to risk our life for a friend, in the hour of trial, we should also surrender our opinions for his service. It is our duty to sacrifice our dearest passions, and our fondest wishes, for his benefit. I undertake the task, although I can anticipate the anguish which I shall endure from the tears and despair of Lydia."

"And in return for this, you will be richly rewarded," answered Jarno. "Fraülein Theresa is a lady whose attractions it would be difficult to equal. She puts many a man to shame. I may term her a real Amazon, though it is true others may assume the title."

The new, near hope of once more beholding that loved and honoured form, awoke in Wilhelm's bosom a thousand strange emotions. He considered the task which had been entrusted to him, as a special intervention of Providence, and the thought that he was employed to carry off a poor maiden, from the object of her strong and virtuous attachment, dwelt but for a moment in his mind, as the shadow of a bird flits across the sun-illumined earth.

The carriage drew up before the door, and Lydia hesitated for a moment to take her seat. "Salute your master once more for me," she said to the old servant who attended her, "and assure him that I shall return before evening." The tears stood in her eyes, as she looked round again, before the departure of the carriage. She turned to Wilhelm with an effort to compose herself, and observed, "You will find the Fraülein Theresa a very interesting person. I wonder what can induce her to visit this neighbourhood, for you must know that she was once deeply attached to the Baron. Notwithstanding the distance at which she resides, Lothario visited her frequently. I was at that period very much in her society, and I thought they could have died for each other. Suddenly, however, their love was shattered to pieces, and no one could ever discern the cause. Lothario had seen me, and I must admit that I envied Theresa's happiness, that I did not seek to conceal my affection from him, and when he evinced a wish that I should fill Theresa's place, I did not

reject him. Her conduct towards me was kind in the extreme, though I could not deny that I had robbed her of her fond lover. But how bitterly have I expiated that love with a thousand pains and tears! At first, we met privately at an appointed place, but I could not long endure that mode of life, as it was only in his presence that I could feel myself perfectly happy. When separated from him my pulse beat wildly, and my eye was never dry. Upon one occasion, he absented himself for several days, and I was reduced to a state bordering upon despair, but I followed him and surprised him here. He received me affectionately, and but for this unfortunate quarrel, my existence with him would have been a perfect paradise. But I cannot describe my sufferings since he has been in pain and danger, and at this moment, I am bitterly reproaching myself for being able to leave him for a single day."

Wilhelm was proceeding to make further inquiries about Theresa, when they reached their destination. The lawyer came out to meet them, and expressed his cordial regret that Fraülein Theresa had already left his house. He invited them to breakfast, assuring them that they might evertake the lady's carriage in the next village. They determined, however, to proceed at once, and the coachman made no delay. Before long, they had passed through several villages, but as yet they had met with no one. Lydia requested to be driven back, but the coachman affected not to understand her and pursued his course. But when she insisted resolutely, Wilhelm called to him, and gave the concerted sign. The coachman replied that they could return by a different road, as he knew one which was nearer and more convenient. He then drove them through a wood and over an extensive common. At length, when they found themselves in a strange country, he confessed that he had lost his way, but that he could soon find it again, as he perceived a village at a short distance before him. The night now came on, and the coachman managed so cleverly, that he made a multitude of inquiries, but never waited to receive an answer. He drove along all night. Lydia, meanwhile, never closed her eyes, in the moon-light she saw resemblances every where, but they quickly disappeared. But in the morning she once more recognized surrounding objects, but they appeared

more strange to her on that account. At length the carriage drew up before a small and pretty country house. A young lady made her appearance and opened the carriage door. Lydia stared at her, looked round, surveyed her again, and then swooned away in Wilhelm's arms.

CHAPTER V.

Wilhelm was taken to an upper chamber. The house was new and very small, but as clean and orderly as possible. But Theresa, who had met him and Lydia at the door, was not his Amazon. She was, indeed, a very different description of person. Well-formed but slender, she moved about with great activity, and the candid expression of her clear blue eyes shewed that she was alive to every thing that occurred.

Upon entering Wilhelm's apartment, she inquired whether he wanted any thing? "Pardon me," she said, "for having given you an apartment which is disagreeable from the smell of paint, but my little mansion has only just been finished, and you are the first person to occupy this room, which I have appointed for my guests. I wish that your business were of a more pleasant nature. We shall not have much comfort with poor Lydia, and you will find many things to excuse in our arrangements. My cook, for instance, has just left me at a most inconvenient moment, and my manservant has lately injured his hand. It may be necessary, therefore, that I should manage every thing myself, and if so, we must be content. There can be no greater plague than servants. They will attend to no one, not even to themselves."

She said a great deal more about many other things, and seemed to have a taste for chattering. Wilhelm inquired for Lydia, and asked whether the kind-hearted maiden would consent to see him that he might offer his excuses?

"You must not expect to succeed in that way just at present," answered Theresa. "Time will excuse you, as it comforts her. For such purposes, words are but of little avail. Lydia will not receive you. 'Let him not shew himself,' she cried, as I left her apartment, 'I shall henceforth despair of human nature. So noble a countenance, so much frankness in his deportment, aud yet this secret guile!' Lothario is quite forgiven; he has written to her, saying, 'My friends persuaded me—my friends compelled me!' and amongst the number, Lydia reckons you, and condemns you with the rest."

"She honours me too highly by censuring me," was Wilhelm's reply. "I can lay no claim to the friendship of that distinguished man. I am only a guiltless instrument in his hands. But I do not seek to defend my conduct—it is sufficient to have acted thus. I was influenced by my regard for the health, the life of a person, whom I value more than I have ever prized a human being. O, what a man he is, Fraülein, and by what men he is surrounded! In their society, I may truly say, I have first learned the value of conversation. For the first time, I have heard the inmost sense of my words re-echoed by the rich, full, and comprehensive observations of another. My own indistinct ideas have been rendered clear to me, and I have been taught to understand my own thoughts. Unfortunately, this delight was at first interrupted by cares and anxieties, and at length, by this distressing adventure. I undertook it with reluctance, but I considered it a duty, even at the cost of my own feelings, to oblige this distinguished circle of men."

Theresa had, in the mean time, been regarding him in a very friendly manner. "O, how sweet it is," she said, "to have our own convictions expressed by the lips of another person! We only then become ourselves, when another understands us thoroughly. My opinion of Lothario agrees precisely with yours. He is not appreciated by everybody, but all those who know him well, are enthusiastic in his praises, and the deep feeling of pain with which I dwell upon his memory, cannot prevent me from thinking of him daily." Her bosom heaved with sorrow as she spoke thus, and her eye was dimmed with a lovely tear. "Do not suppose," she continued, "that I am so weak as to be easily

moved. It is but my eye that weeps. I have suffered from weakness of sight, and the slightest cause occasions a tear to rise." She pointed to her eye. He looked closely, but he could detect no appearance of weakness. But he saw into her eye: it was as clear as crystal: he almost thought he could see into the very depths of her soul.

"A friendship is now established between us," she observed, "let us become thoroughly intimate as soon as possible. The character of every man is known by his history. I will relate to you all that has happened to me; impart to me a little of your confidence in return, and let us for the future be united, even when distance separates us. The world is, indeed, a waste, when we see nothing in it but mountains, rivers, and towns, but when we know that it contains friends whose sentiments accord with our own, and with whom we live in secret and silent intercourse, this earthly ball is converted into a peopled garden."

She took a hasty leave of him, promising, however, to accompany him before long in a friendly walk. He had found her presence very agreeable, and he was anxious to know the nature of her connection with Lothario. He was soon called, and she came from her apartment to meet him.

They were obliged to descend the narrow staircase separately, whereupon she observed, "This house might have been upon a larger and more expensive scale, if I had only acceded to the request of your generous friend, but in order to secure his good esteem, I should preserve those qualities which made me valuable to him. Where is the steward?" she then inquired, adding, however, immediately, "You must not suppose that I am so rich as to keep a steward. I am able myself to superintend the few acres of land which I possess. The steward belongs to my neighbour, who has purchased the adjoining property. I am well acquainted with it. The kind old man is ill with the gout, his people are near to this place, and I give them the benefit of my advice."

They walked through the fields and meadows, and pursued their course through the orchards. Theresa instructed the steward in every thing. She could render an account of every detail, and Wilhelm was astonished at her knowledge and decision, as well as at the readiness with which

in every extremity, she could provide expedients. She never hesitated, always applied herself to the chief points, and thus dispatched the business which she had in hand. "Salute your master for me," she said, as she dismissed the steward, "I intend to pay him a visit as soon as possible, that I may wish him a complete recovery. There," she added with a smile, as soon as he had disappeared, "I might soon become rich and prosperous. I know that my kind neighbour is not disinclined to offer me his hand."

"What! the old man with the gout!" exclaimed Wilhelm, "I could scarcely suppose that, at your years, you could entertain such an idea." "I have not been tempted as yet," answered Theresa, "every man possesses a competence who has sufficient for his duties; riches entail burdens upon those who do not understand them."

Wilhelm expressed his surprise at her knowledge of husbandry. "Strong inclination, early opportunity, outward impulse and uninterrupted employment in a useful pursuit, render many difficult things easily practicable in life," observed Theresa, "and if you only knew what first impelled me to my present course, you would not feel astonished at the talent which you consider so remarkable."

Upon their return to the house, she introduced him to her little garden, in which he could scarcely turn, the walks were so narrow, and the planting was so thick and abundant. He could not avoid smiling, as he walked across the yard. The fire-wood was so accurately sawed, and split and piled, that it seemed to form a part of the building, and looked as if it was intended to remain there for ever. The clean vessels were all standing in order in their places, and the house itself was painted in white and red colours, and was pretty to behold. All those things which shorten labour, and whose value consists less in their beauty, than in their durability and convenience, were united together in one place.

Wilhelm's dinner was brought to him in his apartment, and he had time enough to indulge in meditation. It seemed to him extraordinary, that he should have become acquainted with another person of so interesting a character, who had been so intimate a friend of Lothario. "But it is only natural," he observed to himself, "that so distinguished a

person should attract to himself the society of distinguished women. How far the influence of manliness and dignity extends! O that some persons were not so deficient in these qualities! Yes, confess thy fear. When thou meetest thine Amazon once again, that incomparable woman, thou wilt find in spite of all thy hopes and dreams, that to thy shame and humiliation, she is—his bride."

CHAPTER VI.

WILHELM had spent a restless and wearisome afternoon, when towards evening a handsome youth, dressed in a hunting attire, entered his apartment and bowed to him with a smile. "Shall we take a walk?" he inquired, when Wilhelm instantly recognised Theresa's beautiful eyes.

"You must excuse this appearance of masquerade," she continued, "for unfortunately every thing is now but masquerade! And as I am about to tell you of the times when I was happy in this world, it is my wish to recall those days by every means in my power. Come, then! even the place where we have so often rested from our hunting and our promenades shall contribute its assistance."

They proceeded on their way, whilst Theresa thus addressed her companion: "It is not right that you should let me have all the conversation to myself, you know sufficient of me already, whilst I have learned nothing whatsoever of you. Tell me, therefore, something about yourself, that I may acquire courage to communicate my history to you."

"Alas!" said Wilhelm, I should have nothing to relate but errors and mistakes, heaped one upon another, and I know not from whom I ought rather to conceal the embarrassments into which I have fallen than from you. Your look, and everything about you, your whole deportment and your conduct, convince me that you have enjoyed your past existence, that your fair and pure course of life has been one of uninterrupted progress, that you have not uselessly squandered your time, and that you have no self-reproaches to endure."

Theresa smilingly replied, "We shall see if your opinion

will continue the same, when you have heard my history." They continued their walk, and Theresa asked him, among other things, "Are you disengaged?" "I believe I am," he answered, "though I could wish it were otherwise." "Good!" she said, "that indicates a complicated romance, and whispers that you have something to relate."

So saying, they ascended a steep hill, and laid themselves down beneath a large oak tree, which spread its shadow far and wide in every direction. "Here, then," said Theresa, "beneath this German tree I will recount to you the history of a German maiden—only hear me with patience.

"My father was an affluent nobleman of this province, a cheerful, clear, active and intelligent man, a tender parent, an attached friend, and an excellent economist, in whom I could only recognize one fault—that he was too compliant towards my mother, who did not know his value. Unfortunately, I must confess this much of my mother. She was sudden, inconstant, and without any affection for her house or for me, her only child; extravagant, but beautiful, intelligent, full of talent, and the charm of the circle which she had attracted round her. Her companions were not numerous, nor did she retain them long. For they consisted chiefly of men, as no woman ever felt comfortable in her society, and she could never endure the appearance of the smallest merit in any of her sex. I resembled my father in my outward form, as well as in my disposition. As the young duck runs to the water instantly upon its birth, my earliest attachment was to the kitchen, the store-room, the granaries and the provision cellars. The order and cleanliness of the house, even during my hours of play, seemed to be my principal attraction and my only instinct. This delighted my father, and he gradually gave every encouragement to my early propensities. My mother, on the contrary, did not love me, and made no secret of her aversion.

"As I grew up my own active qualities and my father's love increased. When we were alone, or when we walked through the fields, or when I helped him to examine his accounts, I could perceive his happiness. When I looked into his eyes, I felt as if I were gazing upon myself, for it was in the eyes that our chief resemblance was observable. But he lost his cheerfulness of expression in the presence of

my mother—he defended me gently when she treated me with injustice and violence, and he would take my part, not as though it were his intention to protect me, but as if he would excuse my good qualities. He offered no opposition to any of her fancies. When, upon one occasion, she was seized with a passion for the stage, a private theatre was immediately erected, and though she easily found men, of all ages and conditions, to take part with her in the performances, there was generally a great deficiency of actresses. Lydia, at that time a pretty girl, who had been brought up with me, and who from her earliest years had promised to be extremely beautiful, was induced to take the secondary parts—an old chamber-maid played the mothers and aunts, whilst my mother reserved for herself all the principal heroines, the lovers and the shepherdesses of every kind. I cannot describe the strange effect which was produced upon me to see the performers, whom I knew so intimately, disguised and standing on the stage, and passing for something else than what they really were. I could recognize in them no other persons than Lydia or my mother, this baron or that secretary, whether they appeared in the disguise of princes, counts or peasants, and I could never conceive how they could expect me to believe that they were sad or happy, in love or in despair, liberal or parsimonious, when I so often knew the very contrary to be the case. On this account, I seldom formed one of the spectators. I employed myself, however, in snuffing the candles, that I might not be wholly unoccupied. I prepared the supper, and in the morning, whilst the actors were still asleep, I arranged their dresses—which I generally found that they had left in confusion and disorder.

"Though my mother approved of my activity, I could not win her love. She despised me, and I heard her more than once exclaim with bitterness, 'If the mother were not better known than the father, this girl would scarcely be taken for my daughter.' I must acknowledge that her treatment of me gradually estranged my affections—I regarded her actions as I would have done those of a stranger; and as I was accustomed to watch our servants like a hawk (and let me observe, that herein lies the essence of all housekeeping) I naturally paid particular attention to the motions of my

mother and her friends. It was quite evident that she did not regard all men with indifferent eyes. I watched more closely, and soon observed that Lydia was her confidant, and that she had thus been made more intimately acquainted with a passion, which, from her earliest years, she had so often represented. I was acquainted with all her assignations, but I concealed them from my father, as I was afraid of being the occasion to him of severe distress, but at length I was compelled to speak out. Some of their plans could not be accomplished, without bribes previously distributed amongst the servants. The latter, therefore, soon became disrespectful, they neglected my father's orders, and refused to obey my commands, and as the confusion which ensued was insupportable, I discovered everything to my father.

"He listened to me patiently. 'My good child!' he said at length, with a smile, 'I know it all. But be calm—have patience—since it is only for your sake that I endure it.'

"I was not calm, I was not patient—I condemned my father in my own mind, for I thought that nothing should have induced him to submit to such conduct. I insisted that order should be maintained in the household, and I was determined that the present state of things should not continue.

"My mother had a large private fortune, but she was more extravagant than she ought to have been; and I had observed that this circumstance had occasioned some disagreements between my parents. These lasted for a considerable time, until at length the passions of my mother brought the evil to a climax.

"Her first lover was glaringly untrue, whereupon she became disgusted with her house, as well as with the entire neighbourhood, and with her own condition. She wished to retire to a different residence—there she was too lonely—she removed to town—there she did not think herself sufficiently appreciated. I know not what occurred afterwards between her and my father; but, suffice it to say, that it was at length determined, under certain conditions, with which I am unacquainted, that she should take a journey to the south of France.

"We were now free, and lived as if we were denizens of Paradise; and I do not think my father would have been a loser, even if he had purchased her absence with a consider-

able sum. Our useless servants were dismissed, fortune seemed to smile upon our efforts; we had several good years in succession, and all things prospered according to our wishes. But, unfortunately, this happiness was but of short duration; my father was suddenly seized with palsy, which attacked his right side, and deprived him of the power of speech. We were obliged to guess at every thing he wanted, for he could never express the words which he intended to utter. Oftentimes this was to me fearfully distressing, particularly upon occasions when he insisted upon being left alone with me.—he would signify, by violent gestures, that every other person should retire; but when we were left together, he found himself unable to express his thoughts. His impatience then became extreme, and his distress was deeply afflicting. This much seemed certain—that there was something which he was anxious to confide to me of the utmost importance to myself. I cannot express the anxiety which I felt to know it. Formerly I could see his wishes in his eyes—but this was no longer the case. His eyes no longer spoke. And yet he needed nothing—he wanted nothing—but he was anxious to acquaint me with something which I could not understand. His infirmity gradually increased; and in a short time he became wholly inactive and insensible; and shortly afterwards he died.

"I know not how it happened, but I became convinced that my father had concealed a valuable treasure somewhere, which he had been anxious to bequeath to me rather than to my mother. I made active search for it during his life-time, but I found nothing; and after his death every thing was put under seal. I wrote to my mother, and offered to remain in the house as her agent, but she rejected my offer, and I was obliged to take my departure. My father's will was now produced, by which my mother succeeded to the possession and enjoyment of every thing, and I was left dependent upon her during her life. And now, for the first time, I thought that I could understand my father's object. I pitied his weakness, in allowing himself to act so unjustly towards me. Some of my friends wished me to contest the will, saying, that it was little better than if he had disinherited me; but I was unwilling to take this step. I respected my father's memory too highly—I confided in my destiny—I confided in myself.

"I had, for a long time, enjoyed an intimacy with a lady who possessed a large property in our neighbourhood. She received me gladly, and I soon acquired sufficient experience to take the superintendence of her household. She lived a very regular life, and was a strict lover of order; and I assisted her scrupulously in many a contest with her steward and her domestics. My disposition is neither close nor parsimonious; but we, women, understand better than men the art of preventing extravagance. We detest embezzlement, and we always wish that every one should have what he is entitled to enjoy.

"And now I found myself once more in my own proper element, and in silence I mourned my father's decease. My protectress was quite satisfied with me, and there was only one circumstance which disturbed my peace of mind. Lydia returned; my mother had been cruel enough to dismiss her, after having altogether spoiled her. She had learned, during her residence with my parent, to consider the encouragement of her passions as her proper occupation; and she had never been taught to practise self-restraint. When she arrived so unexpectedly, my benefactress received her, and though Lydia was anxious to assist me in my duties, she could apply herself to nothing.

"About this time the relations and future heir to the property visited us, to enjoy the amusement of hunting. Lothario frequently joined the party, and I soon observed how superior he was to his companions, although without the smallest reference to myself, he was polite to all; but Lydia, before long, engaged his whole attention. I was constantly engaged, and seldom joined the company; in his presence I was more silent than usual, for I will not deny, that agreeable conversation has always been the greatest charm of my life. I had always conversed with my father upon every thing that occurred, and we seldom think accurately upon subjects which we do not discuss. I have never listened to any one with greater pleasure than to Lothario, when he gave us an account of his travels, and his campaigns. The world seemed to lie as clear and as plain before him, as the neighbourhood in which he was residing. He never engaged our attention with wonderful adventures, the improbable exaggerations of a narrow-minded traveller, who describes himself, instead of the country of which he is giving an account—he dealt in no long narra-

tives, but he led us to the very place itself—and I have seldom enjoyed a higher pleasure than in listening to him.

" I experienced an inexpressible pleasure one evening when I heard him offer his opinion about women. The subject had been accidentally introduced ; some neighbouring ladies had paid us a visit, and they made the usual observations about female education. They maintained that our sex was unfairly treated, that the men retained all the higher kinds of education for themselves, excluding us from the study of science, and requiring that we should be nothing more than pretty dolls or mere housekeepers. Lothario did not offer any reply to these remarks, but when the company had broken up, he expressed his sentiments more fully. 'It is strange,' he said, 'that men should be censured for placing women in the highest position which they are capable of occupying ; for what station can be higher than the government of a household? whilst man is perpetually worried with outward affairs, engaged in collecting and securing his income ; or if he is concerned in state affairs, depending upon the course of events, believing that he governs, while, in fact, he governs nothing, politic by compulsion when he would willingly be reasonable, insincere when he would be candid, and false when he would be honourable, abandoning for the sake of an object which he can never attain,—that highest of all objects, his own peace of mind,—a prudent housewife is, in the mean time, ruling within the circle of her own family, and providing for the happiness and content of all around her. What greater bliss can mortals enjoy, than to do what they consider right and good, and to possess the actual means of attaining such an end? And where should our first and dearest object be but in our own household? Where should we look for all those indispensable and perpetual supplies, which are to furnish the cellar, the store-room, and the kitchen, but in that dwelling, where we rise, and where we retire to repose? What a regular course of activity is required to keep this ever-returning series in uninterrupted activity and order? How few men can enjoy the privilege of filling their posts by day and night with the regularity of a star! forming their own household instruments, planting, reaping, gaining, and distributing, and ever appearing in their own circle with unvaried peace, tranquillity, and love.

When a woman has attained this inward mastery, she makes the husband, whom she loves, a real master; her attention ensures knowledge of which her activity can profit. Dependent upon no one, she brings her husband a genuine independence—interior and domestic—his goods are secure, and his earnings well employed, and he is therefore free to devote his mind to high pursuits; and, if he prove fortunate, he can act towards the state the part which his wife performs at home.'

"He then described the kind of wife that he would choose. I blushed as I heard him describe me as I lived and moved. I enjoyed my triumph in secret, particularly as I knew from all the attendant circumstances that he had not alluded to me personally, as, in point of fact, he was not even acquainted with me. I do not recollect, in my whole life, ever to have experienced a more delightful sensation than to feel that a man whom I esteemed so highly, preferred me, not for my personal attractions, but for my inmost nature. What a reward—what an encouragement did I not consider it.

"When they had taken their departure, my kind friend said to me with a smile, 'What a pity it is that men should so frequently think and talk of projects which they have not the least idea of executing! otherwise what an excellent match I should have found for my dear Theresa.' I laughed at her observation, and added, that men's judgments preferred household wives, but that their hearts and imaginations longed for other qualities, and that we homely maidens could not enter into competition with beautiful and attractive women. I said this in the hearing of Lydia, for she did not conceal that Lothario had made a deep impression on her, and he, at each new visit, seemed to pay her additional attention. She was poor, she was not of high birth, she could not think of entering into a matrimonial engagement with him, but she could not resist the pleasure of charming and of being charmed. For my part, I had never been in love, nor did I love at that time, and, although it was inexpressibly pleasant to know how highly I was valued and esteemed by so distinguished a man, I will confess that I was not altogether satisfied. I wished him to know me, and to feel a personal interest in my welfare. I entertained this

wish without forming any definite idea of the consequences.

"The greatest service which I rendered to my benefactress consisted in the efforts which I made to improve the condition of her extensive forests. This valuable property—the worth of which was ever increasing with time and circumstances—was still managed in the old negligent manner, without any plan or order, and there was no end to the pilfering and stealing that occurred. Many mountains remained wholly unplanted, and in few places was there an equal growth of timber. I made my rounds attended by an experienced forester, I caused the woods to be measured, felled, trimmed, and planted, and, in a short time, every thing was established upon a new principle. In order that I might more conveniently ride on horseback, and also that I might walk about with less difficulty, I procured a suit of man's apparel, and in that attire I went every where, and was every where feared.

"Hearing that a party of young men, who were assembled at the house of my benefactress, had made arrangements for a day's shooting, it occurred to me, for the first time in my life, to assume a disguise, or not to do myself an injustice, to pass with Lothario for what I really was. I accordingly equipped myself in man's attire, took my gun upon my shoulder, and accompanied the general body of sportsmen to await the company at the place of meeting. They came —Lothario did not recognise me immediately—one of the nephews of my benefactress introduced me to him as an experienced forester, he joked about my youth, and praised me so warmly, that, at length, Lothario discovered who I was. The nephew assisted my plan, as if we had framed it together, and he narrated, in detail, and in terms of gratitude, all that I had done for the property of his aunt and for himself.

"Lothario heard it all attentively, entered into conversation with me, and made many inquiries about the estates and the neighbourhood. I was delighted at such an opportunity for displaying my knowledge. I passed favourably through my examination, and suggested various projects of improvement, he adopted them, adduced parallel examples, and strengthened my principles by the connection which he

gave them. My satisfaction increased every moment. But fortunately my only object was to be known—not to be loved; although, when we returned home, I observed more evidently than before, that the attention, which he was paying to Lydia, betrayed a secret partiality for her. I had gained my object, and yet I was not happy. From that day he manifested a real respect for me, he confided in me, he usually addressed me in company, and consulted my opinion in household matters as if my knowledge had been universal. His sympathy encouraged me, and when the conversation turned upon topics of agriculture and finances, he inquired my sentiments, and I sought, therefore, to improve my knowledge, not only of our province, but of the entire country. This task was easy, as I only repeated in general terms, what I had previously learnt accurately in detail.

"From this period his visits to me became more frequent. I may say that we discussed every thing together, but, in general, our conversation turned upon subjects of economy, if only in an indirect way. He spoke much of the great effects which a man may produce by the diligent devotion of his powers, his time, his money, and even of apparently trivial means, to the accomplishment of any design.

"I offered no resistance to the inclination which he evinced for me; and, alas! I felt, before long, the depth, the cordiality, the sincerity of my love, as I could perceive daily that Lydia, and not myself, was the object of his frequent visits. She, at least, was fully convinced of this, for she chose me as her confidant, and I felt herein some small degree of consolation. But I saw no reason to encourage the favourable views which she entertained; I saw no prospect of a serious, lasting union, and, for this very reason, I could the more clearly discern that it was her wish to be his at any sacrifice.

"In this state of things my surprise may be conceived, when my benefactress one day made an unexpected communication to me. 'Lothario,' she said, 'proposes to offer you his hand, and wishes that you may consent to be his for life.' She then expatiated upon my good qualities, and added what I was so delighted to hear, 'that Lothario felt convinced that he had found in me the being whom he had so long wished to possess.'

"I had now attained the very summit of happiness. I had been sought in marriage by a man whom I highly prized, at whose side and in whose society I might freely, fully, and profitably employ my natural talents. The sum of my existence seemed infinitely extended. I gave my consent —he then came to me himself, he spoke with me alone, he gave me his hand, he looked into my eyes, he embraced me, he imprinted a kiss upon my lips. It was the first and the last. He spoke to me in confidence of all his circumstances, told me how much his American campaign had cost him, what debts were charged upon his estate, and the reason why he had quarrelled with his grand-uncle, a good man who had loved him after his own peculiar fashion. He had intended to provide him with a rich wife, although a homely partner would have been better adapted for a prudent man. He had hoped, however, that his sister would be able to win him over to his views. He acquainted me with the condition of his fortune, and the nature of his plans and projects, and begged my co-operation. But he wished that our engagement should remain a secret until he had obtained the consent of his uncle.

"He had scarcely taken leave of me, when Lydia inquired whether he had spoken about her. I answered that he had not, and wearied her with a detail of economical affairs. She became restless and dissatisfied, and his conduct, when he returned, did not improve her prospects.

"But I see the sun is about to set. You are fortunate, my friend—otherwise you would have been compelled to listen to the circumstantial detail of a story which it always affords me so much pleasure to narrate. Let me bring it to an end—an epoch is approaching, upon which it is better not to dwell.

"Lothario introduced me to his sister, and she soon found an opportunity to present me to her uncle. I pleased the old gentleman, he acceded to our wishes, and I returned with good news to the house of my benefactress. As the affair was now no secret in the house, Lydia soon became acquainted with it—but she thought it impossible. But when, at length, there was no room for doubt, she disappeared suddenly, and no one knew what afterwards became of her.

"The day of our marriage approached. I had often asked

him for his portrait, and, as he was one day on the point of leaving me, I reminded him of his promise to grant my request. 'You have forgotten,' he said, 'to give me the case in which you wish it to be placed.' This was the fact. I had formerly received a present from a friend, which I valued highly. Her name had been woven, in her own hair, beneath the outward glass, and there was a blank piece of ivory within, upon which her portrait was to have been painted, when, unhappily, she was snatched from me by the hand of death. Lothario's attachment had consoled me at the time when I most keenly felt her loss, and I was anxious to fill the void which had been left in her present with the picture of my friend.

"I hastened to my chamber, fetched my jewel case, and opened it in his presence. He had scarcely glanced into it, when he saw a medallion containing the portrait of a lady. He took it in his hand, contemplated it attentively, and hastily inquired, 'Whom does this portrait represent?' 'My mother,' I answered. 'I could have felt certain,' he exclaimed, 'that it was the picture of a Madame St. Alban, whom I saw some years ago in Switzerland.' 'It is the same person,' I replied, with a smile, 'and you have thus become acquainted with your step-mother, without knowing it. St. Alban is a romantic and assumed name, under which my mother travels, and she is at this present moment in France, under that very designation.'

"'I am the most unfortunate of men,' he exclaimed, as he threw back the portrait into my jewel case, and covering his eyes with his hands, he hastily quitted the apartment. He leaped upon his horse. I hastened to the balcony and called after him, he turned round and waved his hand, but he rode rapidly away, and I have never seen him since."

The sun set. Theresa watched the glow of the heavens with unaverted gaze, and her beautiful eyes filled with tears.

She was silent. She placed her hand upon the hand of Wilhelm—he kissed it affectionately—she rose. "Let us return," she said, "and inquire for our friends."

The conversation, in the meanwhile, was not animated. They entered by the garden gate. Lydia was sitting upon a bench, she rose, retired at their approach, and went into

the house. She held a paper in her hand, and two little girls were standing at her side. "I see," said Theresa, "that she still retains Lothario's letter, which is her only consolation. He promises that he will return, and continue with her, as soon as he is recovered, and he begs that she will, in the meantime, remain with me. She dwells perpetually upon these words, and they form her only consolation, but she is not well disposed towards his friends."

The two children now approached, and, saluting Theresa, they gave her an account of all that had occurred in the house during her absence. "You may observe," she said, "how I am partly occupied. In company with Lothario's excellent sister, I have engaged to educate a certain number of children, I take charge of those who promise to be active and serviceable housekeepers, whilst she superintends the others, who evince a finer and more quiet talent. It is right that they should be instructed in housekeeping, and learn the art of rendering their future husbands happy. When you become acquainted with my noble friend, you will have entered upon a new existence, her beauty and her goodness render her worthy of the world's adoration." Wilhelm did not inform her that he was unfortunately acquainted with the beautiful Countess already, and that his transient connection with her must be to him a source of endless grief. He was gratified to find that Theresa did not pursue the conversation, and her duties soon compelled her to return to the house. He was now alone, and the information which he had received, that the young and beautiful Countess had been driven to repair the loss of her own happiness by a course of active benevolence, made him unspeakably wretched. He felt that she was driven, by the strong necessity of self-oblivion, to the alternative of forgetting the change which had taken place in her own joyous existence, by relieving the misfortunes of others. He deemed Theresa happy, as even the sad and unexpected alteration which had occurred in her prospects, did not require that any change should take place in her disposition. "Happy is the man," he exclaimed, "who is not compelled to reconcile himself with fate, by altering the whole course of his preceding life."

Theresa came to his apartment, and begged pardon for

disturbing him. "My whole library," she said, "is contained in this press, and they are rather books which I have not altogether thrown away, than those which I usually read. Lydia wants a religious book, and there are few of that description amongst my collection. Persons who spend the whole year profanely, think, that in the hour of trial, they ought to become devout—they regard moral and religious pursuits as medicine, which is to be taken reluctantly in times of illness, and they consider clergymen or teachers of morals as physicians, with whom they ought to dispense as soon as possible. But, for my part, I regard religion as a pursuit which should form my rule of life, and of which, during the whole year, I should never lose sight."

Searching amongst her books, she found some of that description which are usually termed edifying. "It was from my mother," said Theresa, "that Lydia learned the habit of reading books like these. Plays and novels were her delight as long as her lover continued true, his abandonment of her once more restored the credit of the former works. I cannot understand," she continued, "how any one can believe that God speaks to us through books and histories. If the universe does not immediately explain our connection with Him, if our own heart does not explain our obligations to ourselves and others, we can scarcely expect to derive that knowledge from books, which seldom do more than give names to our errors."

She left Wilhelm alone, and he spent his evening in examining the little library. He found that it had, in truth, been collected by chance.

Theresa's manner continued quite unchanged during the few days which Wilhelm spent in her society. She related to him very minutely, at different times, the result of the events, to which we have already alluded. Her memory faithfully recalled every incident of day and hour, of place and name, and we shall compress the whole into a small compass for the benefit of our readers.

The cause of Lothario's sudden departure may be easily explained. He had met Theresa's mother upon her journey, her charms had attracted him, and she had given him encouragement, and this hasty and inconsiderate adventure had interrupted his union with a lady whom nature seemed

to have intended for him. Theresa now continued in the pure circle of her duties and her occupation. It was said that Lydia had been living in the neighbourhood in concealment. She was glad when the marriage was broken off by some unknown cause, and she, thereupon, sought to renew her acquaintance with Lothario. He had gratified her wishes rather, as it seemed, from despair than from love, from sudden impulse rather than with deliberation, and more from very weariness than fixed design. Theresa, under these circumstances, remained perfectly tranquil, she had no further claims upon him, and even if he had been her husband, she would probably have had courage enough to bear this grievance, if it had not disturbed her household economy; at least, she had often said, that a wife who manages her household properly, should not censure every little fancy of her husband, but should always depend upon his return.

The property of Theresa's mother had become embarrassed, and Theresa herself suffered in consequence, but, the old lady, who had been her benefactress, had upon her death, bequeathed her a small estate and a considerable sum of money. Theresa became reconciled to her altered circumstances, and when Lothario proposed to settle upon her a property of greater value, and Jarno undertook to negotiate the matter, she absolutely rejected the proposal. "I will convince him by my conduct in this trifling transaction," she said, "that I am worthy to be his partner in greater things, but, should accident embarrass me, either through my own fault or that of others, I shall not hesitate to have recourse to my generous friend."

Nothing is less likely to remain concealed and unemployed than a talent for activity. Theresa had hardly taken possession of her little properly, than her neighbours cultivated her acquaintance, and sought her advice, and the new purchaser of the adjoining estate gave her a plain intimation that she might, if she pleased, accept his hand and succeed to half his fortune. She had communicated this circumstance to Wilhelm, and she had often jested with him about suitable and unsuitable marriages.

Few subjects afford more food for conversation than marriages which men consider to be unsuitable, and yet such unions are more common than marriages of an opposite

kind. Unfortunately, in most cases, marriages, after a very short time, assume a very sorry aspect. The confusion of ranks, by marriage, should be deemed unsuitable only in cases where one of the parties finds it impossible to adopt the manner of living which is natural, habitual, and even indispensable to the other. The different classes of society have different modes of living—which they can neither change nor share with each other—and for this reason it were better to avoid marriages of this nature, but still exceptions, and frequently of a very happy kind, are possible. Thus, the union of a young maiden with an elderly person may be termed unsuitable, and yet I have known instances where such marriages have proved extremely happy. For my own part, I only know one species of unsuitable marriage—that which I should myself be required to manage and direct, and rather than do which, I would cheerfully bestow my hand upon any honest farmer's son in the neighbourhood.

Wilhelm now thought of preparing for his return, and he implored his new friend to procure for him a parting word with Lydia. The impassioned girl suffered herself to be persuaded. Wilhelm spoke to her in a friendly tone, she replied thus: "I have subdued my first burst of anguish, Lothario will always remain true to me, but I know his friends, and am sorry that he is surrounded by such advisers. The Abbé, to gratify one of his own whims, would not hesitate to leave his friends in the greatest necessity. The Doctor would reduce every thing to rule and system. Jarno has no spirit; and you—at least no strength of character. But, continue your course, be still the tool of these three persons, they will give you many a task to execute. I know that my presence has been for a long time hateful to them, for, though I have not discovered the nature of their secret, I have known that they possessed one. If not, why these bolted chambers—these mysterious passages?—why can no one person ever enter into the large tower?—why have they, upon every possible occasion, confined me to my own apartment? I will confess that jealousy first caused me to make this discovery. I feared that some fortunate rival was kept in concealment. But I no longer think so. I am convinced that Lothario loves me, that his intentions are honourable, but, am as firmly convinced that

he will be deceived by his false and cunning friends. If you wish to render him a service, if you would deserve pardon for the injury which you have done to me, rescue him from the hands of these men by whom he is surrounded. But what have I to expect? Give him, at least, this letter, read its contents to him, tell him that I love him, without change, and that I rely upon his word. Ah!" she exclaimed, as she rose from her seat and wept upon Theresa's neck, "he is surrounded by my enemies, they will endeavour to persuade him that I have made no sacrifice for him. O! my best of friends may feel certain that he is worthy of any sacrifice on my part, and that I do not need his gratitude."

Wilhelm parted from Theresa more cheerfully—she hoped to see him soon again. "You understand me thoroughly," she observed; "you have allowed me to carry on the whole conversation—next time we meet it will be your duty to return my confidence."

He had time enough, upon his way home, to reflect calmly upon all that had occurred. With what confidence had she not inspired him? He thought of Mignon and Felix—how happy those dear children would be under her protection—then he thought of himself, and he felt the intense delight of living continually in presence of this serene and tranquil being. As he approached the castle, he thought more than ever of the tower, with its many passages and corridors, and he determined, upon the very next opportunity, to question Jarno, or the Abbé, upon the subject.

CHAPTER VII.

When Wilhelm returned to the castle, he found his friend Lothario wonderfully improved. The physician and the Abbé were absent, and Jarno alone was in attendance upon him. Before long, the invalid was able to take occasional excursions on horseback, sometimes alone, at other times accompanied by some of his friends. His conversation was invariably earnest and entertaining, instructive and cheerful,

and he frequently afforded evidence of a tender sensibility, which it was his constant endeavour to hide, and which he generally condemned, when it was suffered involuntarily to appear.

In this mood he was one evening sitting at the table, absorbed in thought, and yet his look was cheerful.

"So you have had an agreeable adventure to-day," observed Jarno.

"How well you seem to know me!" answered Lothario. "Yes, I have had a most charming adventure. At any other time perhaps, I should not have enjoyed it so much, but to-day it has been perfectly delightful. Towards evening I rode out across the river to the village, by a way which I had taken in years gone by. My illness must have rendered me weaker than I had supposed: I felt exhausted at first, but when my strength returned, I became quite reanimated. All things around me wore the same appearance as formerly, and looked even more charming and lovely than they had ever done before. I knew that this was the effect of my own weakness, but I enjoyed it thoroughly, and rode forward quietly, feeling that I could now partly understand how men can come to love bodily indispositions which awaken such sweet emotions within them. You are doubtless aware of the cause which induced me formerly to take that road so frequently."

"If I remember rightly," answered Jarno, "it was a little love adventure with a farmer's daughter."

"You would be nearer the mark if you had termed it a great adventure," replied Lothario, "for we loved each other tenderly and earnestly, and our attachment was of long duration. By chance, every thing that happened recalled vividly that earliest season of our love. The boys were again employed in shaking fruit from the trees, and the bower where we used to sit had not increased in size since the days when I beheld her first. It was a long time since I had seen Margaret, as she is married at a great distance from here, but I had heard accidentally that she had come with her children to visit her father for a few weeks."

"Your ride then, it seems, was not so purely accidental!"

"I shall not deny," said Lothario, "that I was anxious to meet her. As I approached the dwelling-house I saw her

father sitting before the door, whilst a little child of about four years old was standing at his side. As I came nearer, I observed a woman give a hasty look from an upper window, and when I had reached the door I heard the sound of footsteps descending the stairs. I certainly thought that it was she, and I own I felt flattered at being recognised, and that she was coming to meet me. But how great was my disappointment to see her rush from the door at the approach of my horse, seize the child and carry it into the house! It gave me a feeling of sadness, but my vanity was a little consoled upon observing that her neck and uncovered face bore an evident tinge of redness.

"I stopped and addressed the father, looking up at the windows, in the mean time, to watch if she would again make her appearance, but as I could observe no trace of her, and I was unwilling to make any direct inquiries, I rode away. My disappointment was however mingled with surprise, for though I had scarcely seen her face, she seemed to me to be very little changed—and ten years are a considerable time! she seemed to be actually younger than ever, as slender and as light of foot, her neck, if possible, lovelier than before, and her cheek as easily disposed to blush—and yet she was the mother of six children, or perhaps more. This appearance agreed so well with the other enchantments which surrounded me, that I rode forward with refreshed feelings, and did not turn until I had reached the neighbouring forest just as the sun was setting. And though the falling dew, and the physician's advice, reminded me that it would be prudent to return directly home, I bent my course once more in the direction of the farm-house. I now saw a female figure in the garden, which was only separated from me by a slight hedge. I rode along the footpath, and found myself not far from the person whom I was seeking.

"Though the setting sun was shining full in my face, I could perceive that she was busied with the hedge, which only partially concealed her. I thought I could once more recognize the object of my former affections. I stopped upon coming near to her, not without a palpitation of the heart. Some high branches of wild roses, which a light wind blew to and fro, rendered her figure indistinctly visible. I addressed her, and inquired how she was? She answered

in a low voice 'quite well!' I observed, at the same time, that a child was employed in plucking flowers from the hedge, and I took the opportunity to ask where her other children were? 'That is not my child,' she replied, 'it were somewhat soon.' At that moment, it happened that I could discern her features, through the rose bushes, and I knew not what to think. It was my beloved, and it was not. She was younger and more beautiful than she had looked ten years previously. 'Are you not the farmer's daughter?' I inquired, half perplexed. 'No,' she answered, 'I am her cousin.'

"You are very like one another, I observed.

"'So everybody says, who knew her ten years ago,' she replied.

"I continued to ask her many questions, and I found that the mistake which I had made was pleasant, even after I had discovered it. I could not tear myself from the living image of my former happiness, which stood before me. The child had gone away in the meantime to search for flowers near the pond, and she left me to look after it.

"I had learned, however, that Margaret was actually in her father's house, and during my ride I busied myself with wondering, whether it could have been herself or her cousin, who had snatched the child from the road at the approach of my horse. I thought the whole incident over and over in my mind, and I do not remember that I have ever enjoyed more delicious reflections. But I feel that I am still unwell, and I must have recourse to the doctor, for relief from the effects of this excitement."

The confidential communication of love adventures resembles, in some particulars, the relation of ghost stories. The first is generally followed by a succession of others.

In their recollections of former times, our little party could furnish many incidents of this nature. Lothario had the most to tell. Jarno's stories were all of the same character, and we know already what Wilhelm had to impart. But he trembled lest some one should mention his adventure with the Countess, but it was not alluded to, even in an indirect manner.

"It is quite true," observed Lothario, "that no sensation in life can be more agreeable, than when our heart after a

pause of indifference, opens once more upon a new object of affection; and yet I could cheerfully renounce this happiness, if fate had been willing to unite me to Theresa. We are not always young, we should not always continue children. The man of the world, who knows his duties and his hopes, can find nothing more desirable of attainment than a wife, who will be ever ready to smoothen his path of life, and to assist him with all her energies; one whose activity will be employed to gather what he must leave, and whose diligence will extend on every side, whilst he must pursue his own unvaried uniform career. What a paradise had I not dreamed of enjoying in Theresa! not the paradise of sensual delight, but the heaven of a contented life upon this earth, with whom I should possess moderation in prosperity, courage in misfortune, care for the smallest things, and a soul capable of comprehending and managing great things. Yes, she possessed those qualities which we admire in women of historic celebrity, who are more famous even than men—that clearness of apprehension, expertness in difficulties, certainty about details, by which a prosperous consummation is so readily attained. You will doubtless pardon me," he continued, as he turned towards Wilhelm, "for abandoning Aurelia for Theresa; with the latter, I might have hoped to enjoy a life of perpetual bliss, while, with the former, I could never expect to pass a single happy hour."

"I must admit," said Wilhelm, "that when I first came hither, my heart was highly incensed against you, and I had intended to call you to account for your conduct towards Aurelia."

"I deserve your censure," continued Lothario, "I ought not to have converted my friendship for her into a feeling of love; I should not have substituted, for the respect which she deserved, an attachment which she was neither calculated to inspire nor to return. She could never excite the passion which she felt, and that is the greatest misfortune which can befal a woman."

"Well, that is all over," answered Wilhelm, "we cannot always avoid error—our thoughts and our actions will sometimes strangely turn from their naturally virtuous course. And yet there are certain duties of which we should never lose sight. But peace be to the ashes of our friend! With-

out blaming ourselves or censuring her, we will strew flowers upon her grave. And by the side of that grave, in which the unhappy mother rests, let me inquire why you do not protect her child. He is a boy of whom any one might well be proud, and yet you entirely neglect him. With your pure and affectionate feelings, how can you so wholly forget the instinct of a father's heart? During the entire of our conversation, you have not uttered one syllable about that precious creature, of whose sweet disposition you might have said so much."

"Of whom are you speaking?" inquired Lothario. "I do not understand you."

"Of no other than your son, Aurelia's son, a hopeful child, whose good fortune fails in nothing, but that he should be taken to a father's heart."

"You mistake egregiously, my friend. Aurelia never had a son of whom I could have been the parent. I am not aware of any child of hers, or I would gladly acknowledge it. But even in the present case, I will cheerfully take the boy as a memorial of her, and I will provide for his education. But tell me, has she ever given you to understand that the boy was hers or mine?"

"I do not remember to have heard her utter a word expressly on the subject, but we have always taken it for granted, and I have never had the smallest doubt about it."

"I can give you some useful information," interrupted Jarno. "An old woman, whom you must frequently have seen, brought the child to Aurelia, and she received it gladly, as she hoped that its companionship would bring some relief to her sorrows, and in truth it has afforded her many a happy moment."

Wilhelm was much distressed at this discovery. His thoughts wandered to his kind-hearted Mignon and the beautiful Felix, and he expressed his anxiety to remove both the children from their present situation.

"We can dispose of that matter easily," observed Lothario. "Suffer Theresa to take charge of that wonderful little girl of whom you speak. She could not possibly fall into better hands, and as for the boy, I have been thinking that you may keep him yourself, for the associations of chil-

dren will supply the defects which we ourselves suffer from the want of female education."

"But above all things," interrupted Jarno, "you must consent to renounce the theatre for ever, as you possess no talent for such a pursuit."

Wilhelm was astonished, but he was obliged to restrain himself, for Jarno's harsh opinion had severely wounded his self-love. "If you can only convince me of the fact," he added, with a forced smile, "you will do me a favour, though, after all, it is but a sorry service which you render a man when you waken him from a happy, though delusive dream."

"Without discussing the subject any farther," said Jarno, "I wish we could induce you to bring the children hither. The matter would then be soon arranged."

"I am quite ready to do so," answered Wilhelm. "I am restless and curious to know, whether I cannot learn something further of the boy, and I am anxious once more to see the girl who has evinced so strong an attachment for me."

It was agreed that he should set out immediately. On the following day, all the necessary preparations were completed, the horse was saddled, and Wilhelm only waited to take leave of Lothario. When the hour of dinner arrived, they all sat down to table as usual, without waiting for the master of the house. He did not come till late, when he took his seat amongst them.

"I will lay a wager," said Jarno, "that you have been trying another experiment with your heart to-day. You have not been able to resist your inclination once more to visit your former love."

"You are right," answered Lothario.

"Tell us all about it, then," continued Jarno. "I am curious to hear what happened."

"I must confess," said Lothario, "that I felt more anxious about the matter than I ought to have been. I determined, therefore, to ride to the place again, and to see the person whose juvenile form had made so pleasant an impression upon me. I dismounted at some distance from the house, and led my horse by the bridle, that I might not disturb the children who were playing before the door. I entered the house, and

she came to meet me, for it was herself, and I recognized her, notwithstanding the alteration which had occurred. She had grown stouter, her form seemed somewhat fuller, her beauty was chequered by an appearance of care, and her former sprightliness had passed into a look of gravity. Her head which she once held so free and erect, now stooped a little, and slight lines were observable upon her brow.

"She drooped her eyes when she recognized me, but no blush announced the slightest emotion of her heart. I held out my hand; she gave me hers. I inquired for her husband; he was absent. I asked for her children; she called them to her, whereupon they all came and assembled round me. Nothing can be more charming than to behold a mother with an infant in her arms—nothing more honourable than to see a mother surrounded by her children. I inquired the name of the youngest, as an excuse for saying something; whereupon she invited me to come in, and wait for her father. I consented, and she conducted me into the apartment, where I saw all the old familiar objects still in their old places, and, strange to say, her beautiful cousin, who was her very image, was seated upon a stool behind the spinning wheel, where I had so often seen my own love sitting in the very same posture. A little girl, the exact picture of her mother, had followed us, and thus I found myself in the strangest position between the future and the past, as it were in an orange grove, where, in a small compass, blossoms and fruit appear in close proximity. Her cousin went to bring us some refreshment. I held out my hand to the dear creature whom I had formerly so deeply loved, saying at the same time, 'It gives me the most exquisite joy to see you once again.' 'You are very good to say so,' she replied, 'and I also feel inexpressible delight. How often have I wished that I might see you once again during my life. I have even wished this in moments which I deemed might prove my last.' She said this in a calm tone, without emotion, with that natural air which used to please me so much formerly. Her cousin returned accompanied by her father, and I must leave you to conjecture the feelings with which I bade her farewell."

CHAPTER VIII.

WILHELM, during his journey to town, employed himself in recalling to mind the various lovely women with whom he had ever been acquainted, or of whom he had heard, and as he thought over their various fortunes, which seemed to be so far removed from happiness, his heart was filled with pain. "Alas!" he exclaimed, "poor Mariana! what may I not even yet be doomed to hear of thee? And thou, noble Amazon! protecting guardian-spirit, whom I expect to meet every where, but whom I never see, in what a sad condition may I not perhaps find thee, if it be our fate to meet again!"

When he reached the town none of his acquaintances were at home. He hastened at once to the theatre, expecting to find them engaged at a rehearsal, but here all was still. The house was empty, but he saw one entrance open. He made his way to the stage, and there he found Aurelia's old servant, employed with her needle, in the preparation of some new decorations. There was just sufficient light to allow her to continue her work. Felix and Mignon were sitting near her upon the ground. They both held a book in their hands, and whilst Mignon read aloud, Felix repeated all the words after her, as though he knew his letters, and were able to read.

The children leaped up and welcomed Wilhelm. He embraced them affectionately, and led them close to the woman. "Who are you?" he inquired, in a tone of earnestness, "who gave this child to Aurelia?" She raised her eyes from her work, and turned her face towards him,—he saw her in the full light, and started back with astonishment. It was old Barbara.

"Where is Mariana?" he exclaimed.

"Far from this place," replied the old woman.

"And Felix . . . "

"Is the son of that unhappy, but affectionate and loving girl. May you never know what you have occasioned us to suffer! May the treasure, which I now deliver to you, render you as happy as it has made us miserable!"

She rose to retire. Wilhelm detained her. "I am not

going to leave you," she said; "but I wish to fetch a paper which will at once delight and distress you." She retired, and Wilhelm gazed upon the child with a sorrowful pleasure. He dared not acknowledge the boy as his own. "He is thine!" cried Mignon, "he is thine own;" and she pressed the boy to Wilhelm's knee.

The old woman returned and handed him a letter. "Here are Mariana's last words," she observed.

"Is she dead?" he exclaimed.

"She is dead!" replied Barbara. "I would that I could spare you all reproaches."

Astonished and perplexed, Wilhelm tore open the letter, but, upon seeing the first word, he felt bitterly distressed, he dropped the sheet, threw himself upon a seat, and for some time continued silent. Mignon approached and endeavoured to console him. In the meantime Felix had taken up the letter, and teazed Mignon until she knelt down and read it to him. Felix repeated all the words, and Wilhelm was thus compelled to hear them twice. "If this letter should ever reach thee, shed a tear for thy unhappy Mariana. Thy love has caused her death. The child, whose birth I can survive but for a few days, is thine. I die true to thee, though appearances may condemn me. With thee I have lost every thing which could attach me to life. I die content, as I am assured that the infant is strong, and will survive. Listen to old Barbara—forgive her—farewell—and forget me not."

What a painful and yet consoling and enigmatic letter! The contents afflicted him keenly, as the children repeated each word with stammering and hesitating voice.

"Now you know the whole truth," cried Barbara, without waiting till he had, in some measure, recovered his composure. "Thank Heaven," she said, "that after the loss of so affectionate a friend, this darling child remains to you. You will be beyond measure grieved when you learn that the dear girl remained constant to you to the last, notwithstanding her misery and all her sacrifices for you."

"Let me drain the cup of sorrow and of joy at the same time," cried Wilhelm. "Convince me, only convince me that she was honest, that she was worthy of my esteem and love, and then let me deplore her irreparable loss."

"This is not a proper time for that purpose," replied Barbara. "I have much to do at present, and I do not wish that we should be found together. Keep it secret that Felix is your son. The deceit, which I have hitherto practised, would subject me to many reproaches from the company. Mignon will not betray me, she is good and trustworthy."

"I have known the fact for a long time, and yet I have said nothing," observed Mignon. "How is it possible?" cried Barbara. "When did you learn it?" asked Wilhelm.

"The spirit told me."

"Where—where?"

"In the vault where the old man drew the knife. He exclaimed: 'Call his father,' and the thought struck me that he meant thee."

"Who exclaimed thus?"

"I know not—my heart and my mind felt so distressed: I trembled and I prayed, and when it called to me, I understood."

Wilhelm pressed her to his heart, commended Felix to her care, and then retired. He observed now that she was much paler and thinner than before. The first of his friends whom he met was Madame Melina. She saluted him in the kindest manner. "I hope," she said, "that you may find every thing amongst us correspond with your expectations."

"I doubt it," replied Wilhelm, "I do not anticipate so much. But will you not admit candidly that all the necessary arrangements have been made to dispense with my services."

"Why did you leave us?" inquired his friend.

"We cannot too soon make the discovery," replied Wilhelm, "how easily we may be dispensed with in the world. What important personages do we not esteem ourselves? We think that we alone animate the circle in which we live, and we fancy that, in our absence, life, breath, and activity would almost cease, but the gap which we leave is scarcely noticed, it is soon filled up again by something better, or, at least, by something more agreeable."

"But should we not feel for the sorrows of our friends?"

"Our friends act wisely," he replied, "when they resume their wonted composure, when each of them says to himself,

'Within thy own sphere accomplish what thou canst, be active and cheerful, and find thy happiness in pursuing the present.'"

Upon further inquiries, Wilhelm found, as he had long anticipated, that the opera had been established and had won the whole attention of the public. His own parts had been distributed to Laertes and Horatio, who succeeded in gaining from the public a larger share of applause than had ever fallen to his lot.

Laertes now entered, when Madame Melina exclaimed: "Here comes one of the most fortunate of men! He will soon be a capitalist or something better!" Wilhelm embraced him, and observed that his coat was of the finest cloth, and though the rest of his apparel was simple, it was all made of the very best material.

"Explain this enigma," cried Wilhelm.

"You have still time enough," said Laertes, "to learn how my wanderings through the world are about to be repaid. A partner in a large house of business is profiting largely by my travels, my information, and my connections, and he remunerates me accordingly. I would give much, however, if I could recover my confidence in the sex, for there is a pretty niece in the house, and I see plainly, that if I chose, I could soon be a settled man."

"Perhaps you are not aware," said Madame Melina, "that a wedding has lately taken place amongst us. Serlo has been actually married to the fair Elmira, as her father would no longer permit their secret attachment."

Thus they talked over many incidents which had occurred during his absence, and Wilhelm could very easily perceive that, in the estimation and opinion of the company, he had long since been virtually dismissed.

He awaited, with much impatience, the promised visit of old Barbara, who had agreed to come to him at a late hour in the night. She was to visit him when every one was sunk in sleep, and she had made the most careful and minute preparations to escape detection. In the meantime, he read over Mariana's letter a hundred times with inexpressible delight, he dwelt upon the word *faithful*, which was written by her own dear hand, and with deep sorrow he observed the allusion to her death, of which she did not seem in the slightest degree to apprehend the approach.

The hour of midnight had passed, when he heard a rustling at the half open door of his apartment, and old Barbara entered, carrying a small basket upon her arm. "I must now," she began, "relate to you the story of our woes, though I know you will listen to me without emotion, as you are only anxious to satisfy your own curiosity, and you will soon find shelter within your own selfishness, whilst our hearts are breaking. But, behold! Do you remember that happy evening when I produced the bottle of champagne, and when I placed three glasses upon the table, and you began to deceive us and to lull us with your easy childish tales, in the same manner that I must now waken and arouse you with my melancholy truths."

Wilhelm knew not what to say, when old Barbara actually made the cork fly, and filled three glasses with the contents of her bottle.

"Drink!" she cried, when she had emptied her sparkling glass, "drink before its virtue evaporates, this third glass shall foam untasted to the memory of my hapless friend. How rosy were her lips when she, upon that evening, drank to your happiness—Alas! how eternally cold and livid are they now!"

"Sibyl! Fury!" cried Wilhelm, as he leaped up and struck the table with his hand, "what evil spirit possesses and impels you? Of what can you suppose that I am made, if you think the simplest statement of Mariana's sufferings and death, will not sufficiently distress me, without these hellish efforts to increase my torments. If your appetite is so insatiable that you must riot at the very funeral table—drink and speak! You have ever been the object of my aversion, and I can scarcely believe that Mariana herself was guiltless, when I remember that she was your companion."

"Softly, Sir!" interrupted old Barbara. "You will not succeed in provoking me. You owe us much, and we ought not to feel irritated at the anger of a debtor. But you are right. My simplest narrative ought to prove to you a sufficient punishment. Listen then to the account of Mariana's combat and victory, that you may be able to endure your fate."

"My fate!" cried Wilhelm, "what story are you about to tell?"

"Do not interrupt me," she continued, "listen, and then believe me as you please—it is all the same to me. Did you not, on the last evening, that you spent with us, find a note in Mariana's chamber, and carry it away?"

"I found a note, it is true, after I had accidentally carried it away. It was folded up in the neckhandkerchief, which I had taken up, upon the sudden impulse of love, and which I concealed within my bosom."

"What did that note contain?"

"The hopes expressed by a disappointed lover, that he would meet with a more favourable reception on the following evening. And I need no assurance that his expectations were fulfilled, for I saw him, with my own eyes, leave your house at an early hour in the morning."

"You may have seen him, but you have yet to learn how we spent that night, how sad a night it was to both Mariana and myself. I will be candid with you, and will neither deny that I persuaded Mariana to receive the addresses of Norberg, nor shall I defend my conduct in so doing; she listened and obeyed my suggestions with the utmost reluctance. He was rich, he seemed in love, and I hoped that he would prove constant. Shortly afterwards he was compelled to set out upon a journey, and Mariana became acquainted with you. What had I not from that moment to resist, to oppose and to endure, 'Oh!' she would frequently exclaim, 'if you had only spared my youth and my innocence for a short time longer, I should have found an object worthy of my love, one of whom I might myself have proved worthy—and I might have surrendered with a safe conscience what I have now sold against my will.' She was wholly devoted to you, and I need not ask if you were happy. I possessed an unbounded power over her mind, for I understood the means of satisfying her most trifling wants, but I had no power over her heart, without the approbation of which, she would never sanction either my conduct or my suggestions—she only yielded to unconquerable necessity, and necessity soon visited us in the most pressing form. In her early youth she had never known what it was to want, her family, however, by a complication of calamities at length lost all their property—the poor girl had been accustomed to all the comforts of life,

and her gentle spirit had been influenced by sound principles, which rendered her unhappy without contributing to her relief. She was wholly without experience in worldly matters—and she was innocent in the strictest sense of the word. She had not the slightest idea that one could purchase without money, and in her mind there was no terror more appalling than debt. She always gave more willingly than she received, and nothing but such a state of affairs could have compelled her to give herself away, in order that she might be able to liquidate a host of small debts with which she was encumbered."

"And could you not have saved her?" inquired Wilhelm.

"Oh yes!" answered Barbara, "at the expense of hunger and want, sorrow and privation, but for such sufferings I was by no means prepared."

"Base and abominable wretch, to sacrifice the unhappy innocent for the gratification of your insatiable appetite!"

"You had better calm your anger and restrain your abuse," replied Barbara, "or if you will chide, visit the noblest houses, and observe the mothers there, who are anxious for the welfare of their lovely, heavenly girls, sacrificing them to the most odious husbands for the sake of wealth. See how the poor innocents shudder and tremble at their fate, finding no consolation, save in the counsel of some experienced female friend, who informs them that marriage alone will confer upon them the power of disposing of their hearts and persons as they please."

"Hush!" said Wilhelm, "do you think then that one crime can be excused by the commission of another? Proceed with your narration without any further observations."

"Then hear me, and withhold your censure. Mariana became your's against her will. I do not deserve blame for that. Norberg returned, and proceeded without delay to visit Mariana. She received him with coldness, and denied him even the privilege of a kiss. I tried all my arts to excuse her conduct. I told him that her confessor had awakened her scruples, and that they deserved to be respected as long as they continued. I succeeded in inducing him to withdraw, promising to use my best influence in his favour. He was rich and headstrong, but he was kind-hearted and loved Mariana beyond expression.

He promised to be patient, and therefore I exerted myself the more earnestly that he should not be too severely tried. But I had a more difficult task to perform with Mariana, but at length I induced her, indeed I may say that I compelled her, by threatening to leave her service, to write to Norberg and invite him to resume his visits. You came at this juncture, and accidentally carried away his answer, in the neckhandkerchief of which you have spoken. Your unexpected arrival interrupted the course of my proceedings. You had scarcely gone away when she recommenced her wailings; she vowed that she would never be unfaithful to you, and she became so passionate and so excited, that I pitied her sincerely. At length, I promised her that for this night I would pacify Norberg, and induce him by some means or other to defer his visit. I entreated her to retire to bed, but she would not trust me, and refused to comply with my request. At length, exhausted with weeping and violent agitation, she fell asleep without undressing.

"Norberg arrived, and I persuaded him to remain, but I told him fully of her conscientious scruples and remorse. He expressed a wish to see her, and I went to her room to prepare her for his visit. He followed, and we both approached the bed together. She awoke, sprang up wildly and tore herself from our arms. She implored and begged, wept, threatened, and vowed she would not yield. She was imprudent enough, in some expressions which she used, to advert to the true state of her feelings, but I induced Norberg to interpret these in a spiritual sense. But at length he retired and she locked the door. I detained him for some time, and conversed with him about her state, informing him that she was in the family way, and that she ought, therefore, to be indulged. He felt so proud at the announcement that he consented to every thing she asked, and determined to set out upon his travels for a time, rather than displease her by his presence, and perhaps injure her by occasioning those mental irritations. So resolved, he took leave at an early hour, and if, as you confess, you watched our house as a sentry, you would have required nothing for the perfection of your happiness than to have searched the bosom of your rival, whom you considered so fortunate and so favoured, and whose presence made you so desperate."

"Are you speaking truly?" asked Wilhelm.

"As truly," answered Barbara, "as I hope to drive you to despair. And you could not but despair, if I were able correctly to describe the scene which occurred on the following morning. How cheerfully did she awake, and call me to her —how sincerely did she thank me, and how affectionately did she press me to her heart! 'Now!' she said, as she approached her looking glass with a smile, 'now I may once more feel proud of my looks and of my form, since I once more belong to myself, and to my dearly loved friend. How delightful it is to conquer! How grateful do I feel for your care of me, and for having turned your prudence and your understanding to my advantage. Do not abandon me, and you can contrive the means of rendering me happy.' I assented, as I was unwilling to irritate her. I flattered her hopes, and she caressed me tenderly. If she were absent from the window but for an instant, I was compelled to keep watch, for you would surely pass by, and she wished at least to see you. And thus we spent an anxious day. At night, when the accustomed hour arrived, we expected you without fail. I took my post upon the stairs, but the time passed drearily away, and I returned to Mariana. To my astonishment, I found her dressed in her officer's uniform, and she looked unspeakably charming. 'Do I not deserve,' she asked, 'to appear in man's apparel? Have I not acted bravely? My beloved shall see me to-day, once more, as he first saw me, and I will press him to my heart as tenderly and with more freedom than ever, for I am now entirely his, and my noble resolution has rendered me completely free. But,' she added, after a short pause, 'I have not even yet quite succeeded. I must make another attempt to prove that I am worthy of him, and that I may possess him entirely. I must disclose every thing, discover to him my whole condition, and leave it to himself to retain or to reject me. I must prepare this scene for myself, and for my friend, and if his feelings are capable of rejecting me, I shall then belong entirely to myself. I shall find consolation in my punishment, and cheerfully submit to the dispensations of fate.'

"With these intentions, and with these hopes, the lovely girl awaited your arrival. You came not. O! how shall I describe her anxiety and her suspense? I see her still before

me, and I hear once more the expressions of love and ardent affection with which she spoke of the man of whose cruelty she was not yet aware."

"Good, kind Barbara!" cried Wilhelm, as he sprung to his feet and seized the old woman by the hand, "we have had enough of artifice and preparation. Your calm, indifferent, and contented tone betrays you. Restore my Mariana to me! She lives—she is at hand. It was not for nothing that you chose this late, this solitary hour, for your visit—not for nothing that you have prepared me with this charming tale. Where is she? Where have you concealed hee? I believe all—I will promise to believe all, if you will only show her to me, and you restore her to these arms. I have beheld her image already, let me once more clasp her in my arms. I will fall upon my knees and implore her pardon. I will congratulate her upon the victory she has achieved over herself, and I will take my Felix to her. Come, where have you concealed her? Keep me and her no longer in uncertainty! Your object is attained. Where have you hidden her? Come, let me light you with this candle, that I may once more behold her sweet face!"

He had dragged old Barbara from her chair. She stared at him, whilst the tears started from her eyes, and she was seized with violent grief. "What unfortunate error," she exclaimed, "allows you still to indulge a moment's hope? Yes, I have hidden her, but it is beneath the earth, where neither the light of the sun nor any friendly taper shall ever illumine her sweet face. Lead your affectionate Felix to her grave, and tell him that there lies his mother, whom his father condemned without a hearing. Her kind heart throbs no more with impatience to behold you, nor is she waiting in an adjoining chamber for the conclusion of my story, or my fairy tale, but the dark chamber has received her, whither no bridegroom will ever follow her, and from whence none have ever yet returned to receive a lover's affectionate embrace."

She flung herself upon the ground and wept bitterly. Wilhelm now, for the first time, felt convinced that Mariana was dead. He was in despair. Barbara arose, and exclaiming, "I have nothing more to add," she threw down a packet upon the table. "There are some letters," she

added, " which will make you blush for your cruelty. Peruse them without a tear, if it be possible." She then retired quietly, and Wilhelm had not courage that night to open the packet. The pocket book had been a present from himself to Mariana, in which, as he well knew, she had been accustomed carefully to preserve every letter that she received from him. On the following morning, he took courage, and untied the ribbon, when a multitude of little notes met his eye, which had been written in pencil with her own hand, and they reminded him of every incident which had occurred, from the first day of their delightful acquaintance, to the last of their sad separation. It was not, therefore, without feelings of the keenest anguish that he read the notes which had been addressed to him, and which, as he gathered from their tenor, had been returned to her by Werner.

"None of my letters have as yet been able to reach you —my prayers and my entreaties have been in vain. Did you yourself give these cruel orders? And shall I never see you more? Once again, I will make an effort. I implore you to come,—O come! I will not ask to detain you, if I may but once more press you to my heart."

" When I formerly sat beside you, and held your hands, and looked into your eyes, and said, with a heart full of confidence, 'O! dear, dear, kind Wilhelm!' you used to hear me with such pleasure that I was obliged to repeat the same words frequently. Once more I repeat them, 'O, dear, dear, kind Wilhelm! be still kind as you were wont to be!' Come, and leave me not to perish in my misery!"

" You deem me guilty, and I am so, but not to the extent you think. Come, that I may enjoy the delight of being wholly known to you. Let my fate afterwards be what it may."

" Not for my sake only, but for your own, I implore of you to come to me. I feel the insupportable agony which you endure, whilst you fly from me. Come, then! that our separation may be less cruel. I was, perhaps, never worthy of you, till this very moment, when you drive me to boundless misery."

"I call to you by every thing that is sacred, by all that can touch a human heart! My life,—my soul is in peril; two lives, of whom one, at least, must be for ever dear to you. Your suspicious heart will not believe me, and yet I will proclaim it in the hour of death. The infant, which I carry beneath my heart, is thine. Since the moment when I first loved you, no other person has ever pressed my hand. O, that your love, that your virtue, had been the companions of my youth!"

"You will not hear me! Then I must at length be silent, but these letters shall not perish. Perhaps they may speak to you even yet, when the shroud has enveloped my lips, and the voice of your repentance can no longer reach my ears. During my sad life, till the last moment of my existence, this will be my only consolation, that to you I have been guiltless, though I cannot say I have been wholly free from blame."

Wilhelm could read no more. He abandoned himself entirely to his sorrow. But he felt oppressed with grief when Laertes made his appearance, and he sought to hide his affliction from him. The latter drew out a purse full of money, which he counted over and over, assuring Wilhelm at the same time that there was nothing more delightful in the world than to feel one's self upon the road to wealth, as nothing then could disturb or restrain the freedom of our actions. Wilhelm thought of his dream and smiled, but at the same time he remembered with a shudder that in that dream, Mariana had left him to follow his deceased father, and that, at last, they had both hovered about the garden in the form of spirits.

Laertes interrupted his reflections, and led him to a coffee house, where a multitude of persons assembled round him, who had formerly known him upon the stage. They expressed their joy at meeting him once more, but lamented to hear that he intended to abandon the stage, and they expressed such decided and reasonable opinions of his acting and of his talents, and of their own hopes, that Wilhelm exclaimed at length, not without emotion, "O, how precious to me would have been your sympathy but a few months ago! How instructive, how encouraging I should have found it!

Never should I have so completely turned my mind from stage affairs, or have gone so far as to despair of the public."

"We should never go to that extent," observed an elderly man, who now stepped forward: "the public is a large body, and correct judgment, and right feeling, are not such rare qualities as one would suppose. But an artist never should expect unconditional applause. Unconditional applause is worth but little, and you, gentlemen, are not satisfied with that which is conditional. I am aware that in life, as well as in art, a man must consider well, before he accomplishes or produces any thing, but when once his work is executed and completed, he must hear with patient attention the opinions of the multitude, and from them, with a little practice, he may be able to form a sound judgment; but those persons, who could easily save us all this trouble, generally remain silent."

"They should not act thus," said Wilhelm. "But I have often heard that men who never express an opinion with regard to works of merit, are the loudest to complain of the silence of others."

"Then we must speak out to-day," cried a young man. "You must dine with us to-day, and we will pay off a debt which we have long owed to you, and to the good Aurelia."

Wilhelm declined the invitation, and proceeded to the house of Madame Melina, wishing to confer with her about the children, as he thought of removing them from her.

Old Barbara's secret was not too faithfully kept by Wilhelm. No sooner did he see little Felix, than he betrayed himself. "O, my child, my darling child," he exclaimed, as he took him in his arms, and pressed him to his heart. "What have you brought for me, father?" cried the child. Mignon looked at both of them, as if she would have commanded them not to divulge the secret.

"What new miracle is this?" inquired Madame Melina. The children were taken away, and Wilhelm, who did not conceive that he owed the strictest secrecy to old Barbara, detailed the whole occurrence to his friend. Madame Melina looked at him with a smile. "O, these credulous men!" she exclaimed, "how easy is it to persuade them of anything that is pleasant, but upon other occasions they will look neither to the right nor to the left, and they value nothing which has not previously received the impress of an arbi-

trary passion." She could not repress a sigh, and if Wilhelm had not been completely blind, he could have detected in her conduct a regard for him which had never been wholly subdued. He now conversed with her about the children, as he thought of keeping Felix himself, and of sending Mignon into the country. Madame Melina, though unwilling to part with either of them, approved of his design, and even considered it necessary. Felix was becoming quite wild as long as he remained with her, and Mignon seemed to require fresh air and a change in her pursuits. The dear child was delicate, and showed no symptoms of improvement.

"You are not to suppose," added Madame Melina, "that I have thoughtlessly expressed my doubts about the child's being really yours. The old woman is scarcely to be believed, and if she can tell untruths for her own advantage, she may speak truth when it is profitable. She has already persuaded Aurelia that the boy is a child of Lothario's, and it is the disposition of women cordially to like the children of their lovers, even when they do not know their mothers, or cordially detest them." Felix now came running into the room, and Melina pressed him to her heart with unusual affection.

Wilhelm returned home, and sent for Barbara, but she would not engage to meet him before the evening. He received her angrily, and said, "There can be nothing more disgraceful than to tell lies for your own private advantage. You have already done much mischief, and now, when your words can decide the happiness of my life, I stand in doubt, and dare not take that child in my arms, though to receive him with full confidence would render me the happiest of beings. Thou shameful creature, I cannot behold thee without hatred aud contempt."

"Your conduct," replied the old woman, "if I must speak candidly, seems to me quite intolerable. For even if he is not your son, he is the dearest and loveliest child in the world, whom one would be glad to purchase at any price, if it were only for the pleasure of his company. Is he not worth your acceptance? And do I not deserve a pension for the rest of my life, in consideration of my care, and of the trouble which I have had with him? O, you men, who have never known want, may talk with ease of truth and honesty, but a poor creature who cannot provide for

the smallest necessity, who in the hour of distress is wholly destitute of friends, of advice and assistance, how she is to overcome the selfishness of the world, or to starve in silence? —this is a subject upon which I might say much, if you had time or patience to hear me. Have you perused Mariana's letters—those which she wrote in the hour of her direst distress? In vain did I endeavour to find you, that I might give them into your own hands. Your cruel brother-in-law had so contrived, that he defeated all my plans, and at length when he threatened me and Mariana with imprisonment, I was compelled to abandon every hope. But does not every event that has occurred agree with what I have said? And does not Norberg's letter place the whole statement beyond the possibility of doubt?"

"What letter?" asked Wilhelm.

"Have you not found it in the pocket book?" inquired Barbara.

"I have not read them all:" answered Wilhelm.

"Then give me the pocket book," continued she, "for upon that letter every thing depends. Norberg's unfortunate note occasioned the whole calamity, a subsequent one from his hand, may, perhaps, unravel the knot so far as any thing may depend on our success." She took a letter from the pocket book. Wilhelm recognised the hated writing, but restraining his feelings, he read:

"Explain to me, girl! how you possess such influence over me. I should never have thought that a Goddess herself could have converted me into a sighing lover. In place of receiving me with open arms, you avoid me, and I could almost believe that your conduct arose from personal dislike. How could you allow me to pass the whole night with old Barbara, seated upon a trunk? and all the time my darling Mariana was but a few paces distant! It is really too bad! But I have promised to allow you some time for reflection, and not to force myself upon you, and I shall regret every quarter of an hour which I thereby lose. Have I not been as generous to you as I could? Do you doubt my love? What do you require? tell me—you shall want for nothing. I pray that every evil may light upon the clergyman who put such scruples into your head! Why did you visit such a person? There are plenty of others

who would have made allowances for youth. But enough—I tell you that your conduct must change. In a day or two I expect your answer, or I shall soon leave you again, and if you do not become kind and friendly to me, you shall see me no more."

The letter proceeded in this style to a considerable length, and to Wilhelm's painful satisfaction, it always dwelt upon the same point, which afforded evidence of truth of the account that he had heard from Barbara.

A second letter proved beyond doubt that Mariana had never acceded to his proposals, and from this and several other papers, it was not without the deepest anguish that Wilhelm made himself acquainted with the history of the unhappy girl, even to the hour of her death.

Barbara had afterwards gradually subdued the harshness of Norberg, by informing him of Mariana's death, and by allowing him to suppose that Felix was his son. He had accordingly remitted money to her upon several occasions, which however she had always retained for herself, as she had persuaded Aurelia to take charge of the child. But unfortunately this secret mode of obtaining a livelihood did not long continue. Norberg, by a life of dissipation, soon squandered the greater part of his fortune, and repeated love adventures hardened his heart against the child whom he believed to be his own.

But although the whole of this statement appeared so probable, and all the circumstances concurred admirably together, Wilhelm was slow to abandon himself to joy, as he seemed to dread receiving even a present from the hand of so evil a genius.

"Time alone can cure your jealousy," said Barbara, who guessed what was the condition of his mind. "Consider the child, therefore, as a perfect stranger, and on that account be more attentive to it. Observe its talents, its disposition, its capabilities, and if you do not gradually discover the perfect resemblance which it bears to yourself, you can have but little discernment. I assure you, that if I were a man, no one should ever succeed in forcing a child upon me, but it is fortunate for women that men are not always so quick-sighted."

After this, Wilhelm and Barbara separated. He wished

to take charge of Felix himself, that Mignon should be taken to Theresa, and that Barbara should spend her days wherever she pleased, supported by a little pension which he proposed to settle upon her.

He accordingly sent for Mignon, that he might prepare her for the proposed change. "Master!" she said, "keep me with yourself—it will be for my advantage and for my sorrow."

He represented to her that she was now grown up, and that something should be done for her further education. "I am sufficiently educated," she answered, "to love and to grieve."

He reminded her that her health required attention, and that she stood in need of incessant care, and of the directions of a skilful physician. "Why should any one care for me," she replied, "when there are so many other things to care for?"

After he had taken infinite trouble to convince her of the impossibility of her remaining with him at present, and had assured her that he would commit her to the care of some friends, where she might frequently see him, she appeared as if she had not heard a word that he had spoken. "Then you will not allow me to remain with you!" she said. "Perhaps it is better then to send me to the old Harper, the poor man is so solitary."

Wilhelm endeavoured to explain to her that the old man was now in comfortable circumstances. "I long for his company every hour," replied the child.

"I never observed that you were so much attached to him, whilst he lived with us," said Wilhelm.

"I was afraid of him," replied Mignon, "when he was awake—I could not bear to see his eyes—but when he slept, I liked to sit beside him, and to keep the flies from him, and then I never tired of looking at him. O, he has been a comfort to me in fearful moments! No one knows how deeply I am indebted to him. If I had only known the way, I should long since have fled to him."

Wilhelm now explained his intentions fully, saying that Mignon had always been a reasonable child, and that she might, upon this occasion, do as she pleased. "O, reason is cruel," she replied, "the heart is better! But I will go wherever you wish, only leave little Felix with me."

After much discussion, she persisted in her request, and Wilhelm was obliged to consent that both children should be entrusted to old Barbara, who was to send them together to Theresa. He came to this decision the more easily, as he still feared to acknowledge the beautiful Felix as his own child. But he took him in his arms, and carried him about. The child loved to be held before the looking-glass, and Wilhelm felt a secret delight in holding him there, and in tracing a likeness between them. When he thought he had discovered a momentary resemblance, he pressed the child to his bosom, but suddenly alarmed at the thought that he might have been deceived, he would set him down and let him run away. "Alas!" he would then explain, "if I could only be certain that this priceless treasure were mine, and were it then to be taken from me, I should be the most wretched of men!"

The children were now removed, and Wilhelm determined to take a formal leave of the stage, but he felt that this had been already done, and that it only remained for him now to take his departure. Mariana was dead, his two guardian angels had gone away, and his thoughts followed them. The lovely Felix still floated like a charming but uncertain vision before his fancy, he saw him at Theresa's side, running through the fields and woods, and receiving his education in the free air, from a free and cheerful protectress; and Theresa became dearer to him than ever, as his mind dwelt upon her, in connection with his little Felix. Even as a spectator in the theatre he thought of her with smiles, and he felt that he was almost in her own condition, as theatrical representations no longer produced an illusion in his mind.

Serlo and Melina treated him with extreme politeness as soon as they observed that he made no further pretensions to resuming his former place. A portion of the public were desirous that he should appear before them again, but this was an impossibility, and of the company themselves none seemed to wish it, with the exception perhaps of Madame Melina.

Of this latter friend he now took final leave, his heart was moved, and he could not avoid exclaiming, "O, that men should ever presume to promise themselves any thing which depends upon the future! Even upon the veriest trifle they

can place no reliance—to say nothing of those things which are of importance. How do I blush to think of the promise which I made to you upon that unfortunate night when we all lay robbed, ill and wounded in that miserable tavern. How did misfortune then elevate my courage, and what resources did I not expect to find in my good intentions! but alas! they have produced nothing. I leave you as your debtor, and it is my happiness to find that none of you valued my promises beyond their worth, and that I have never since been reminded of them."

"Do not be so unjust towards yourself," said Madame Melina, "if no other person will acknowledge what you have done for us, I at least shall never forget it; for our whole condition would have been different, if we had not possessed the advantage of your presence. It is with our intentions as with our wishes. They no longer wear the same appearance when they have been accomplished—when once fulfilled, we consider that we have obtained nothing."

"Your kind explanation," answered Wilhelm, "will scarcely suffice to tranquillize my conscience, and I shall always consider myself to be your debtor."

"It is quite possible," answered Madame Melina, "that you may really be so, but not in the precise way that you suppose. We consider it disgraceful not to perform a verbal promise which we have engaged to fulfil. O, my friend, the very presence of a good man promises much. The confidence which he elicits, the attachment which he creates, the hopes which he awakens, are unbounded; he becomes our debtor and will continue so, though he be not aware of the obligation. Farewell! if our outward circumstances have been fortunately restored through your assistance, your absence will create a void in my bosom which I shall find it difficult to fill."

Before his departure from the town, Wilhelm addressed a long letter to Werner. They had already exchanged several letters, but as they had differed about several matters, their correspondence had been interrupted. But now, they were approaching nearer to each other, Wilhelm was on the point of complying with the earnest wishes of his friend—he could now say, "I am about to abandon the stage, and to associate with men whose connection will, in all respects, lead

me to commence a pure and active life. He made some inquiries about his property, and it seemed to him strange that for so long a time he should have troubled himself so little about his affairs. He knew not that it was the habit of men, who are wholly engaged in the cultivation of their minds, absolutely to neglect their outward affairs. Wilhelm had found himself in this condition, but he now began, for the first time, to recollect that in order to work effectively, he required the assistance of outward means. He pursued his journey therefore in a different temper than formerly—the prospects which he saw before him were encouraging, and he hoped to meet with happiness upon his way.

CHAPTER IX.

When he arrived at Lothario's castle, he found that a great change had taken place there. Jarno came to meet him with the news that Lothario's uncle had died, and that he himself had set out to take possession of his estates. "You are come," he continued, "at a fit time to render assistance to the Abbé, and to me. Lothario has commissioned me to purchase some valuable estates in the neighbourhood. The whole matter has been well considered, and we are provided with both money and credit at a most favourable moment. One circumstance, however, has occasioned some delay. A house of business, established at some distance from here, has contemplated making the same purchase, and we have resolved to enter into an agreement together, as otherwise we might perhaps outbid each other without reason or necessity. It appears that we have to deal with a clever man. We are at present engaged in making our estimates and calculations, and we must consider particularly how the lands are to be divided, so that each of us may possess a valuable estate. All the papers were accordingly submitted to Wilhelm—they contained an account of the fields, the meadows and the castles, and though Jarno and the Abbé appeared to be well acquainted with business, Wilhelm could

not help wishing that Theresa had been called in to their assistance.

They were engaged for many days in these labours, and Wilhelm could scarcely find time to acquaint his friends with his late adventure, or with his doubtful paternity, but they treated the circumstance with the utmost indifference and levity, although it was to him an event of the greatest importance.

He had frequently remarked their habit of suddenly pausing at table, or during their walks, when they entered into confidential communications together, and gave a private meaning to their words—thus shewing that they were engaged in some pursuits with which he was unacquainted. He now remembered what Lydia had formerly told him, and he gave credit to it all with the more confidence as one side of the castle had always been inaccessible to him. It contained some long corridors and galleries, and there was one old tower in particular, with whose exterior he was well acquainted, but to which he had long sought to obtain entrance in vain.

One evening Jarno said to him, "We now look upon you as our friend, and it would be unjust not to admit you to a fuller participation in our secrets. It is proper for a man, upon his first entrance into life, to think highly of himself, and endeavour to attain distinction, as well as conceive that all things are possible, but when his education has reached a certain point, then it is more advantageous that he should lose himself in the great mass of mankind, that he should learn to live for others, and forget himself in a course of conscientious duty. He then becomes acquainted with himself for the first time, for it is by our conduct that we are enabled to compare ourselves with others. You shall soon know what a little world there is in your immediate neighbourhood, and how intimately you are known within its limits. To-morrow morning, before sunrise, be dressed and ready."

Jarno came at the appointed hour, and conducted him through various apartments of the castle, and then passing along some narrow galleries, they arrived at length at an old and massive door, which was strongly incased with iron. Jarno knocked, the door opened a little, so that a man could just force his way in. Jarno pushed Wilhelm through the

narrow aperture, but did not follow him. Wilhelm now found himself in an obscure and confined chamber, and when he endeavoured to advance, he felt his progress obstructed. A voice, with which he was not wholly unacquainted, desired him to enter; and he now perceived that the sides of the chamber were hung with curtains, through which a feeble light was just visible. "Come in!" exclaimed the voice again, and raising up the curtain, he entered.

The room in which he now found himself appeared to have been formerly a chapel, but the altar had been removed and replaced with a large table, which stood upon steps, and was covered with a green cloth. Some tapestry was seen above it, which appeared to conceal a picture. The sides of the apartment were ornamented with some elaborately worked presses, enclosed with a fine netting of wire, as we are accustomed to see them in libraries; but in place of books, they were filled with rolls of parchment. There was no creature in the room, and the rising sun shone upon Wilhelm, as it beamed through the painted windows, and kindly greeted him.

"Sit down!" cried a voice, which seemed to come from the altar. Wilhelm took possession of a small arm-chair, which stood before the entrance of the apartment. There was no other seat in the room, and Wilhelm was therefore forced to occupy it, although the morning sun dazzled him. The seat was immoveable, and he had no resource but to shade his eyes with his hand.

In the mean time the curtain over the altar opened with a rustling noise, and shewed a dark empty space within a picture frame. A man now stepped forward, clothed in ordinary apparel, who bowed to him, saying, "Do you not recognize me once more—do you not desire to know, among other things, what is become of the collection of natural curiosities which once belonged to your grandfather? Have you forgotten the picture which you formerly thought so charming? Where do you suppose that the King's son is now pining away?" Wilhelm at once recognized the stranger, who had conversed with him at the inn, upon that important night. "Perhaps," continued he, "we shall now agree better upon the subjects of Destiny and Character."

Wilhelm was about to make a reply, but the curtain suddenly closed. "Strange!" he whispered to himself, "is it possible that accidental occurrences can have this connection —and can what we term Destiny be nothing more than Chance? Where can my grandfather's collection be at present? and why am I reminded of it at this solemn moment?"

He had scarcely time for further reflection before the curtain again opened, and a man appeared, whom he recognized as the country clergyman who had joined him and his happy party in their sail upon the river; he resembled the Abbé, and yet he seemed to be a different person. With a cheerful countenance and dignified expression he commenced. "It is not the duty of the tutor to guard his pupil from error, but to guide the erring steps of his youth, and it is even wise in the instructor to allow him to satiate his appetite with folly. He who only tastes his error will dally with it long, and enjoy it as a rare delight, but he who exhausts it completely, will learn its worthlessness, if he be not wholly senseless." The curtain closed once more, and Wilhelm again had time for reflection. "To what error can the man allude?" he thought, "but that which has pursued me through my whole life, and has induced me to seek for instruction where it was not to be found—to fancy that I possessed a talent, to which I had not the smallest pretensions."

The curtain opened more swiftly than before. An officer appeared, and said, as he passed by rapidly, "Learn to know the men in whom you may confide!" The curtain closed, and Wilhelm did not require much reflection to perceive that this was the officer who had embraced him in the Count's park, and had caused him to believe that Jarno was a recruiting officer. But who this person really was, or how he had found his way hither, was a mystery which he could not explain. "If so many persons," he thought, "feel interested for you, and know your way of life, and how it should have been pursued, why have they not guided you with a firmer and a stricter hand? Why have they rather encouraged than forbade your folly?"

"Argue not with us," cried a voice, "you are saved, and on the road to happiness. You will never repent nor repeat

your follies—and this is the happiest destiny which can be allotted to man." The curtain opened once again, and the old King of Denmark stood within the picture frame. "I am thy father's spirit!" said the figure, "and now I depart in comfort, since my wishes for thee are accomplished more fully than I myself could have anticipated. Steep ascents must be approached by winding paths, once upon the summit straight roads conduct from place to place. Farewell, remember me—when thou enjoyest what I have provided for thee!"

Wilhelm was astonished. He thought he heard his father speak, and yet the voice was unlike his. He was perplexed between the occurrences of the present and the remembrances of the past.

He had not reflected long before the Abbé came forward and placed himself behind the green table. "Come hither!" he cried to his astonished friend. Wilhelm advanced and ascended the steps. A small roll of parchment lay before him—"Here are your indentures!" said the Abbé. "Take them to your heart – they are of deep importance." Wilhelm took them in his hand, opened them, and read.

"INDENTURE.

"Art is long, life is short; judgment is difficult, opportunity fleeting. To act is easy—to think is difficult, and to act pursuant to our thoughts is troublesome. Every beginning is pleasant. The threshold is the place of expectation. The boy wonders, the impression strikes, he learns as a pastime; seriousness takes him by surprise. Imitation is born with us, but what we should imitate is not easily discerned, and more rarely valued. The summit charms us, not the ascent—with the height before our eyes, we love to linger in the plain. Only a portion of art can be taught, but the artist needs the whole. He who is only half instructed, ever errs and talks much. He who knows it all, is content with performing, and speaks little or late. The former has no secrets and no force—his teaching is like baked bread, pleasant and sufficient for a day, but flour cannot be sown, and seed corn should not be ground. Words are good, but there is something better. The best cannot be explained by words. The spirit in which we act is the chief matter.

Action can only be only understood and represented by the spirit. No man knows what he is doing whilst he acts well, but of doing ill we are always conscious. He who only works with symbols is a pedant, a hypocrite, or a bungler. They are a numerous class, and associate well together. Their cant impedes the scholar, and their unvarying mediocrity afflicts the best. The instruction of the genuine artist opens the mind—for where words fail, his performance speaks. The genuine scholar learns from the known to develop the unknown, and so he gradually becomes a master."

"Enough!" cried the Abbé, "the rest at its proper time. Now turn your eyes upon these presses."

Wilhelm advanced and read the inscriptions upon the parchment rolls. He observed with astonishment, Lothario's apprenticeship, Jarno's apprenticeship, and his own apprenticeship recorded there, with many others, to whose names he was a stranger.

"May I ever hope to examine these rolls?"

"In this chamber there is nothing now to be concealed from you."

"May I ask one question?"

"Without doubt, and you may expect a decisive answer if it relates to any subject which lies nearest to your heart, and ought properly to be there."

"I am content. Tell me, ye mysterious sages, whose look can penetrate so many secrets—tell me, if you can, whether Felix is really my son?"

"A blessing attend you for that question!" cried the Abbé, clasping his hands together for joy. "Felix is your son! I swear to you by all that is most sacred, and which lies hidden from us, that he is your son! and in our estimation, his mother, who is dead, was not unworthy of you. Receive the dear child from our hands, look round and dare to be happy."

Wilhelm heard a rustling noise behind him. He turned about, and beheld a child's face peeping playfully through the curtain at the door of the apartment—it was Felix. The boy hid himself as soon as he was observed. "Come forward," cried the Abbé. He ran forward. His father rushed to meet him, took him in his arms, and pressed him to his

bosom. "Yes! I feel it," he exclaimed, "thou art mine! For what a precious gift of Heaven am I not indebted to my friends! From whence dost thou come, my child, at this important moment?"

"Do not inquire!" replied the Abbé. "Hail to thee, young man! Thy apprenticeship is finished—nature has set thee free."

BOOK VIII.

CHAPTER I.

Felix sprang into the garden. Wilhelm followed him with rapture. A beautiful morning had clad every object with new charms, and Wilhelm felt indescribably happy. Felix was a stranger in the new and glorious world, and his father was not much better acquainted with the various objects about which the boy made such repeated and incessant inquiries. At length they joined the gardener, who informed them of the names and of the uses of a multitude of plants. Wilhelm beheld nature in a new aspect, and the inquisitive curiosity of the child occasioned him now to feel how slight an interest he had hitherto taken in external things, and how limited was his real knowledge. Upon this day, the very happiest of his life, it appeared as if his education was actually beginning, and he felt the necessity of instructing his own mind, now that he was called upon to teach.

Jarno and the Abbé did not return till evening, when they were accompanied by a stranger. Wilhelm received him with astonishment, and scarcely believed his eyes when he saw Werner, who for a moment was equally surprised at recognizing him. They embraced each other affectionately, and each expressed his opinion that he thought the other considerably altered. Werner declared that his friend was taller, stouter, more erect, more polished in his bearing, and more pleasing in his manner. "And yet I miss something of your old true-heartedness," he added. "It will appear again," replied Wilhelm, "when we have recovered a little from our first astonishment."

Werner, however, had not made so favourable an impression upon Wilhelm. The former appeared rather to have

retrograded than advanced. He was thinner than formerly, his sharp features appeared to have grown finer, his nose was longer, his head had become bald, his voice was clear, loud, and shrill, and his hollow breast, his drooping shoulders, and pale cheeks, placed it beyond doubt that he had become a melancholy man of business.

Wilhelm was prudent enough to say little about the change which he observed, whilst Werner, on the contrary, was loud in the expression of his friendly joy. "Really," he exclaimed, "if, as I suspect, you have spent your time unprofitably, and have not grown rich, you have, at least, become a man who must surely win a fortune. Do not spend and waste this capability at all events. With your figure, you cannot fail of winning a rich and beautiful heiress." "Ah!" cried Wilhelm smilingly, "I see you do not belie your former character. Scarcely do you see your friend after his long absence, than you look upon him as a bale of goods, a matter of speculation, something of which money may be made."

Jarno and the Abbé did not appear astonished at this recognition, and they allowed both friends to discourse freely upon past and present events. Werner walked round and round Wilhelm, and turned him about on all sides, so as completely to embarrass him. "No," he cried, at length, "I have never seen any thing like it, and yet I know that I am not mistaken. Your eyes are deeper, your forehead wider, your nose is finer, and your mouth handsomer than before. And only look how he stands! How every thing seems to suit and to agree! There is nothing like idleness! As for a poor fellow like me," he continued, as he surveyed his figure in the glass, "if I had not been making money all this time, I should have been absolutely ruined."

Werner had not received Wilhelm's last letter. His was the house of business with which Lothario had intended to enter into an agreement for the purchase of the estate. It was this business which had brought Werner hither, and he had not the slightest notion of meeting Wilhelm on his way. The lawyer came, the papers were produced, and Werner found the terms reasonable. "If your intentions are kind," he observed, "as they appear to be towards this young man, take care that our share of the estate is suffi-

cient, and he shall have the option of investing part of his fortune in its purchase." Jarno and the Abbé assured him that they did not stand in need of this suggestion. Scarcely had they discussed the business in general terms, than Werner expressed a wish for a game at ombre, in which he was immediately joined by Jarno and the Abbé. He had now grown so accustomed to play, that he could not pass an evening without such amusement.

When the two friends were seated together at table, they conversed familiarly about every thing that had occurred. Wilhelm boasted of his present mode of life, and of his good fortune in having been admitted into such high society. Werner, however, only shook his head, and said, "For the future, I shall believe nothing but what I see with my own eyes. More than one officious friend assured me that you were living with a dissipated young nobleman, and supplying him with actresses, while you helped him to spend his money, and to quarrel with his relations." "I should be sorry," answered Wilhelm, "both for my own sake and that of my kind friends, at having been so much calumniated, if my theatrical career had not rendered me tolerant of evil tongues. How seldom can men form an opinion of our conduct, which they see only in parts and fragments, while vice and virtue are pursued in secret, and little more than indifferent actions are done in public. Actors and actresses appear upon the open stage, lights burn brightly on every side, and yet the whole performance is over in a few hours, and few persons know what to make of it."

Wilhelm proceeded to inquire about his family, his young friends, and the occurrences of his native town. Werner informed him rapidly of the changes which had taken place, and of the present condition of things. "The women at home," he said, "are happy and content, for they stand in no need of money. They spend one half of their time in dressing, and the other half in showing themselves when dressed. They attend tolerably well to housekeeping. My boys are becoming clever youths. I already see them in spirit sitting at their desks, and writing, reckoning, trafficking, and trading. They shall all have a pursuit of their own, as soon as possible, and as for our fortune, you will be quite pleased with its present condition. When we have arranged about our

purchase of the estate, you must return home with us, for it seems to me that you could now transact business with some skill. Your new friends deserve great praise for having directed your steps into the proper way of life. I have been a sad simpleton, and have only now discovered how much I love you, as I am never tired of admiring your handsome appearance. But you are very different from the portrait which you sent to your sister, and which occasioned such an altercation in our family. Your mother and sister were quite delighted to see you with your loose collar, open breast, long pendant hair, round hat, short vest, and long wide pantaloons, while I, on the other hand, maintained that such a costume made you resemble a harlequin. But now you look more like a reasonable being; you only want a cue, in which I entreat that you will bind your hair, otherwise you will be taken for a Jew, and be compelled to pay tax and tribute."

Felix, in the mean time, had come into the apartment, and as no notice had been taken of him, had laid himself down on the sofa, and fallen asleep. "What child is that?" inquired Werner. Wilhelm, at the moment, had not courage to tell the truth, and he was unwilling to relate an ambiguous tale to a person who was not over credulous.

The whole party now proceeded to the lands, in order to examine them and conclude the bargain. Wilhelm did not allow Felix to leave his side, and, for the child's sake, he rejoiced at the intended purchase. The eagerness of little Felix in pursuit of the fruits and berries which were becoming ripe, reminded him of his own youth, and of the manifold duties of a parent to procure and maintain a succession of enjoyments for his children. With how much interest did he not survey the nurseries and the surrounding building! How clearly did he not see the necessity of repairing what was neglected, and of restoring what was decayed! He no longer looked upon the world with the eye of a bird of passage, nor did he now consider a building —which we are to inhabit—as a hastily constructed bower, which is destined soon to wither. He determined that every thing which he now began for his child should be completed, and that whatever he constructed should last for several generations. In this sense, his apprenticeship was

now ended, and, with the feelings of a father, he had now acquired all the virtues of a citizen. He felt this, and his joy was extreme. "O! the needless severity of morals," he would exclaim; "since nature alone, by her own kind courses, will lead us to every thing that we require. O! strange demands of civil society! which, in the first place, perplex and mislead, and then exact more from us than ever nature demands! Woe to every kind of education which destroys the means of obtaining true culture, and points our attention to the end, instead of securing our happiness on the way."

Notwithstanding his experience of life, it seemed as if his observation of this child, was giving him his first clear insight into human nature. Both the theatre and the world now appeared to him as a multitude of thrown dice, upon whose upper surface a higher or a lower number was marked, and which, when added together, make up a certain sum. But here, in this child, one single die was placed before him, upon whose several sides the value and the worthlessness of human nature was plainly indicated.

The boy's thirst for information increased every day. Having once learned that things had names, he became anxious to know the name of every thing. Believing that his father could be ignorant of nothing, he teazed him with a multitude of questions, and compelled him to inquire into many objects to which he would otherwise have given no attention. He soon showed that he possessed an innate disposition to investigate the origin and end of all things. When he inquired whence came the wind, or whither went the flame, his father first became aware of his own limited capacity, and wished to learn how far man might venture with his thoughts, and upon what things he might hope to enlighten himself or others. The boy's anger, when he beheld any living thing unjustly suffering, pleased Wilhelm exceedingly, as it afforded evidence of his generous disposition. Upon one occasion he struck the cook violently for having cut up some pigeons; but the favourable impression which this produced upon Wilhelm, was soon afterwards destroyed, when he saw him mercilessly killing frogs or tearing butterflies to pieces. These little occurrences reminded him of the habits of mankind, who are extremely

virtuous, as long as they are free from temptation, or are only engaged in criticising the conduct of their neighbours.

The delightful feeling that the boy was producing so wholesome and beneficial an influence upon his own mind, was however disturbed for a moment, when Wilhelm observed that Felix was rather educating him than he Felix. He was unable to correct the child's habits, and he could give his mind no direction which was not quite spontaneous: as even those faults with which Aurelia had so resolutely striven, were resumed again, after the death of that kind instructress. Felix would still leave the door open behind him, would refuse to eat from his plate, and enjoyed no greater pleasure than to find that he was not watched, when he could help himself from the dish, or drink out of the decanter. He was also highly delighted when he could sit down in the corner with his book, and say, with a serious look, "I must study this learned stuff!" though he was ignorant of his letters, and refused to learn them.

When Wilhelm considered how little he had hitherto done for Felix, and how little he was capable of accomplishing, he became so restless that his whole happiness was disturbed. "Are we then so selfish by nature," he would whisper to himself, "that we are incapable of caring for any being but ourselves? Is my conduct towards Felix different from what it was towards Mignon? I engaged the child's affections, her presence delighted me, and I afterwards cruelly neglected her. What have I done for her education, about which I evinced such anxiety? Nothing. I left her to herself, or exposed her to all the accidents which could befal her in the coarse society of uneducated men. And now for this boy, who was so interesting to me before I knew his value, has my heart ever required me to render him the smallest service? It is now too late to waste my own time, or that of others—I must take courage and think how I should labour for myself, and for the kind creature, to whom I am so warmly attached by the ties of nature and affection."

This soliloquy was but an introduction to the admission that he had already reflected deeply, that he had experienced much anxiety, and that he had sought and made his choice. He could no longer hesitate to confess it. After

intense and vain anguish at the loss of Mariana, he had felt too clearly that he must seek a mother for his child, and that it would be impossible to find one superior to Theresa. He was thoroughly acquainted with that incomparable woman. She seemed to be precisely the companion to whom he ought to entrust his dearest interests. Her honourable attachment to Lothario gave him no uneasiness. A strange destiny had separated them for ever. Theresa deemed herself free, and she had already spoken of marriage with the utmost indifference, though she seemed to consider it as an event which was perfectly understood.

After long consideration he determined to acquaint her with his whole history, so far as it was comprehended by himself. He wished that she should know him as thoroughly as he was known to himself, and accordingly he began to reflect upon his past life, but it seemed so barren of events, or, at least, so little to his credit, that he was more than once on the point of abandoning his intention. At length he resolved to apply to Jarno for the roll of his apprenticeship, which he had seen in the tower. The latter answered that he had applied for it at the proper moment, and Wilhelm accordingly received it from him.

It cannot be without a feeling of awe, that a noble mind should hear a full and candid revelation of his whole past history. Every period of transition is a crisis, and there can be no crisis without a disease. How unwillingly do we survey ourselves in the glass, after having suffered from a long sickness! We feel that our health is restored, but we see only the effects of the past illness. Wilhelm, however, was sufficiently prepared—events had already spoken to him loudly—his friends had never spared him, and even if he now unrolled the parchment with unseemly haste, his mind became more and more tranquil the farther he perused. He saw the various scenes of his past life delineated with a few bold sharp strokes, and neither trivial events nor narrow thoughts perplexed his view, but the most generous reflections instructed him, without rendering him ashamed. He now beheld his picture for the first time—not, indeed, his second self—as in a mirror, but his other self, as in a portrait, and though such likenesses may not resemble us in every feature, we rejoice at having been so well understood and

represented by genius and talent, that an image of ourselves exists, and may endure when we ourselves have passed away.

As the manuscript recalled all past events to Wilhelm's memory, he now employed himself in writing out a sketch of his life for Theresa's perusal, and he felt ashamed that in comparison with the great talents which she possessed, he had nothing to show, and was even deficient in the common virtue of a useful activity. Although the account which he gave of himself was circumstantial, the letter which accompanied it was brief. He sought her friendship, and, if possible, her love; he offered her his hand, and implored her speedy decision.

After an inward struggle whether he should communicate this important event to his friends, Jarno and the Abbé, he determined to remain silent. He felt that the business was of too much importance to him to be submitted to the judgment even of the most prudent or the best of men, and, therefore, he took the precaution of committing his letter to the nearest post with his own hands. Perhaps the knowledge that he had been observed, and even guided, in many actions of his life, which, according to his own belief, he had performed spontaneously or in secret—a fact which was made apparent by the roll which he had perused—had produced an unpleasant feeling in his mind, and he now felt anxious, in addressing Theresa's heart, to speak purely from his own heart, and to leave his fate to her decision and determination—and, therefore, he did not hesitate to conceal this important matter from his watchful overseers.

CHAPTER II.

Wilhelm had scarcely dispatched his letter, when Lothario returned. Every one seemed glad that the important business in which they were engaged, would soon be concluded, and Wilhelm awaited with anxiety the disentanglement of the complicated thread upon which his future happiness depended. Lothario saluted them cordially: he

was perfectly recovered, and had resumed his usual cheerfulness. He had the appearance of a man, who knows the duties which he has to discharge, and understands the way in which they should be performed.

Wilhelm was unable to return his friendship with equal cordiality. "This man," he repeated to himself, "is the friend, the lover, the bridegroom of Theresa, into whose place I am endeavouring to insinuate myself. Do you think you can ever extinguish or efface the impression which has been made?"—If his letter had not already been dispatched, perhaps he might not have dared to send it. Fortunately, however, the die had been cast. Perhaps Theresa had already made her decision, and distance alone had flung her veil over the happy consummation. Success or failure must soon be made apparent. He tried to find repose amid all these reflections, for the emotions of his heart had rendered him feverish and anxious. He could devote but little attention to the important business, upon which depended, in some measure, the fate of his entire fortune. But alas! in moments of passion how trivial does everything else appear in which we are engaged.

To Wilhelm's great comfort, Lothario acted with generosity in the matter, and Werner behaved with indifference. Notwithstanding his strong anxiety for gain, the latter manifested great delight at the fine estate, which he, or rather his friend, was about to possess. But Lothario, on the other hand, seemed engrossed with very different thoughts. "I cannot feel so much pleasure in the possession of an estate, as in the justice of the means by which it has been acquired."

"And have we not acquired ours justly?" demanded Werner.

"Not altogether," replied Lothario.

"Do we not purchase it with ready money?"

"That is true," observed Lothario, "and perhaps you may consider my ideas to be nothing but unmeaning scruples. But I cannot consider a property to be fairly acquired, which does not pay its contribution to the state."

"What!" said Warner, "and do you wish that our lands, which have been purchased free from taxation, should be subject to an impost?"

"Yes!" answered Lothario, "to a certain degree. And it is only this general equality that can render our possessions

secure. Why does the peasant, in these times of change, when so many old ideas are becoming obsolete, consider that the possessions of the nobleman are less secure than his own? Because they are exempt from burdens to which he is subject."

"But how would these notions agree with the interest of our capital?" inquired Werner.

"Quite well," replied Lothario; "if, in return for a just and regular taxation, the state should exempt us from feudal obligations, allowing us to act as we please with our lands, and permitting us to divide them, if we think fit. We might then dispose of them amongst our children, whom we could establish in a free and active life, instead of leaving them an inheritance of contracted and contracting privileges, for the enjoyment of which, we must for ever invoke the spirits of our ancestors. How much greater would be the happiness of men and women, if they might look freely around them, and elevate by their choice a worthy maiden or a deserving youth, without any other prospect than that of happiness. The state would, in that case, be better supplied with citizens, and would seldom find a deficiency of either heads or hands."

"I assure you," said Werner, "that in the whole course of my life, I have never troubled myself about the state. But I have always paid my share of taxes, dues and imposts, in compliance with custom."

"Well," answered Lothario, "I have some hopes yet of making a good citizen of you. For, as he only deserves to be called a good father, who at table helps his children first, so none others are good citizens save those who, before every other outlay, discharge the imposts laid upon them by the state"

By such general considerations as these, their business was rather expedited than retarded. When it was nearly concluded, Lothario said to Wilhelm, "I must now send you to a place, where you will be more useful than you can be here. My sister begs, that you will visit her as soon as possible. Poor Mignon is very ill, and it is thought that your presence may, perhaps, be of service to her. My sister sent this note after me, and you may perceive what importance she attaches to it." Lothario handed him the letter. Wilhelm, who had listened with the greatest embarrassment, recognised in the note, which had been hastily written in

pencil, the hand of the Countess, and knew not what to answer.

"Take Felix along with you," said Lothario, "the children will amuse each other. You must set out to-morrow morning at an early hour. The carriage of my sister, in which my friends arrived, is still here. I will provide you with horses for half the journey. After that, you can travel by the post. Farewell. Remember me in the kindest manner to them all. Tell my sister that I shall see her before long, and that she must prepare for the entertainment of some guests. The friend of our grand-uncle, the Marquis Cipriani, is on his way to visit us. He had hoped to find the old man still alive. They would have entertained each other with the remembrance of their former intimacy, and with their common love of art, The Marquis was younger than my uncle, and was indebted to him for many of his accomplishments. We must exert ourselves to supply the void which he will find, and we shall attain that object best, by amusing him with society."

Lothario now retired with the Abbé to his chamber, and Wilhelm hastened to his own apartment. He knew no one in whom he might confide, no one, who could assist him, to avoid the step which he so much feared to take. The servant came, and begged that he would commence his packing, that they might be ready to set out at break of day. Wilhelm felt uncertain how to act; but, at length, he exclaimed, "I must leave this house at all events, and I may reflect afterwards upon the course I ought to take. I can stop in the middle of my journey, send a messenger back hither, and write what I am afraid to speak; and then I care not what may happen." In spite of this resolution, he spent a sleepless night, and was only comforted by casting a look on Felix, who was sleeping so tranquilly. "Alas!" he cried, "who knows what trials I may yet have to endure, how much I am yet to suffer from my past errors, how often my happy projects in future, are doomed to miscarry—but O, thou merciful and unmerciful fate! preserve for me this treasure which I still possess. Were it possible that this best part of my existence should be destroyed, that this heart should be torn violently from my own—then farewell to my reason and understanding, farewell all regard for care or prudence, farewell every impulse to perseverance! Fare-

well in fine to everything which distinguishes us from mere animals! And if we are not allowed voluntarily to end our own dreary existence, may speedy madness banish all consciousness before Death, which destroys it for ever, shall envelope me in endless night!"

He took Felix in his arms, kissed him, pressed him to his bosom, and shed over him a copious flood of tears. The child awoke—his bright eyes, his cheerful look, touched the father to the inmost heart. "What a scene shall I have to witness," he exclaimed, "when I present thee to the unfortunate, but beautiful Countess; and when she shall press thee to a heart which thy father has injured so deeply! Have I not reason to fear, that she will reject thee with a cry of anguish, when a touch of thine shall renew her real or her fancied pain!"

The coachman allowed him no further time for thought or hesitation. He compelled Wilhelm to take his place in the carriage. He accordingly wrapped Felix up warmly, as the morning was cold, but bright, and the child, for the first time in its life, witnessed the rising of the sun. His astonishment at the first glow of dawn, and at the increasing splendor of the light, his joy and expressions of surprise, rejoiced his father, and gave him a glimpse into the child's heart, before which the sun ascended and shone, as over a pure and silent sea.

When they reached a small village, the coachman unharnessed his horses, and rode back again. Wilhelm took possession of an apartment, and began seriously to consider, whether he should pause or proceed upon his journey. In this state of indecision, he took out the little note, which, as yet, he had not dared to read. It contained the following words. "Send your young friend as quickly as possible. Mignon, during the last few days, has become worse. And though the occasion is sad, I shall be glad to make his acquaintance."

Wilhelm, at the first glance, had not observed these concluding words. He was now terrified, and determined not to proceed. "How!" he exclaimed, "is it possible that Lothario, who knows all that has occurred between us, has notinformed her who I am? She is not calmly awaiting an acquaintance, whom she would rather not see, but expects an utter

stranger! I enter—I see her start back with a shudder! I see her blush! No, it is impossible that I can encounter such a scene!" At this moment the horses were brought out, and harnessed to the carriage. Wilhelm, however, resolved to unpack his luggage, and remain. His agitation was extreme—when the servant came to tell him that everything was ready. He sought to find some excuse for farther delay, whilst his eyes were fixed carelessly upon the note which he held in his hand. "Can it be possible?" he suddenly exclaimed. "What do I see? This is not the writing of the Countess, but of the Amazon!"

The maid appeared and asked him to descend, taking Felix with her. "Is it possible?" he cried, "can it be true? What shall I do? Remain here and collect my thoughts, or hasten forward and rush into an explanation? I am on the road to her, and can I pause? I may see her this evening, and shall I willingly remain in prison? Yes! this is her handwriting—she calls me—the carriage is ready which is to take me to her, and now the enigma is solved. Lothario has two sisters. He knows of my acquaintance with the one, but is ignorant how much I owe the other. Even she cannot know that the wounded wayfarer, who is indebted to her for his health, perhaps for his life, has been received with such undeserved kindness in her brother's house."

Felix who was amusing himself in the carriage, now cried to him, "Father, come—O, come! look at those beautiful clouds, those lovely colours!" "Yes! I am coming," answered Wilhelm, as he hastened down stairs, "all the glories of Heaven, with which you, my sweet child, are so much delighted, are as nothing compared with the happiness which I expect!"

When he had taken his seat in the carriage, he revolved in his mind all the circumstances that had occurred. This then can be no other than Natalia, Theresa's friend! What a discovery! what hopes and what anticipations! How strange that the fear of hearing one sister spoken of, should have wholly concealed from me the existence of the other! With what joy did he not now look on Felix, he hoped that he would meet with the kindest reception!

Night was coming on: the sun had set, the road was rough, the postillion drove slowly. Felix had fallen asleep, and new

cares and doubts agitated the bosom of our friend. "What delusion," he thought, "what error has now seized me? An uncertain resemblance in the handwriting has hastily convinced me, and occasioned me to indulge the strangest fancies!" He examined the note again by the light of the setting sun, he thought that he beheld the handwriting of the Countess. His eyes refused to recognize in the details what his heart had acknowledged in the whole. "These horses then are carrying you to a scene of terror! Who knows whether in a few hours they may not bring you back again? And if you should meet her alone! But perhaps her husband or the Baron may be present! How changed may I not find her? Shall I have courage to address her?"

But a faint hope, that she might be his Amazon, would gleam occasionally through his troubled thoughts. It was now night: the carriage rolled into a court yard and drew up at the doorway: a servant bearing a torch descended the broad wide steps, and advanced to receive him. "You have been long expected!" he said, as he opened the door. Wilhelm descended, and took the sleeping Felix in his arms, and the first servant called to a second, who was standing before the door with a light, "Conduct the gentleman to the Baroness." Like lightning, the thought instantly occurred to Wilhelm. "What happiness—be it by accident or by design, the Baroness is here! I shall see her first! perhaps the Countess will have retired to rest! Assist me, ye good spirits, that I may have strength to bear this moment of deep perplexity?"

He entered the house, and found himself in the most solemn, and according to his own feelings, in the holiest place which he had ever visited. A dazzling lustre, which hung from the ceiling, shed its light over a broad flight of stairs of gentle acclivity which stood before him, and parted at the turning into two divisions. Marble statues and busts stood around upon pedestals, or were arranged in niches —with some of which he seemed familiar. The impressions of youth are never wholly extinguished, even in their smallest details. He recognized a Muse, which had formerly belonged to his grandfather, not indeed by its form or by its value, but by an arm which had been restored, and by a piece of

the robe which had been replaced. He felt as if he were under the influence of enchantment. But the weight of little Felix fatigued his arms, he paused upon the stairs and knelt down, as if he would arrange him more conveniently. But, in fact, he needed a moment's rest, and he found it difficult to rise again. The servant offered to carry the child, but Wilhelm would not consent. Upon arriving at the antechamber, to his great astonishment, he recognized the picture of the sick King's son, which hung upon the wall. But he had scarcely time to notice it, as the servant without pausing, passed through two rooms into a cabinet. Here behind a shaded lamp, which softened the light that it flung around, sat a young lady engaged in reading. "O, that it were she!" thought Wilhelm in that decisive moment. He placed little Felix down, who seemed as if he were about to awake, and he thought of approaching the lady, but the child sunk down oppressed with sleep, whereupon the lady rose, and advanced to meet him. She was his Amazon! He could not restrain himself. He fell upon his knee and kissed her hand with indescribable rapture. The child lay upon the carpet, in soft repose.

Felix was carried to the sofa. Natalia seated herself beside him, and invited Wilhelm to take the chair which was standing near. She offered him some refreshment, which he declined, as he was employed in assuring himself that she was the same person, and in closely scrutinising her features. She spoke to him in general terms of Mignon's sickness, stating that the child was pining away under the influence of some deep mental affliction, that under extreme excitement, which it endeavoured to conceal, its little heart suffered painful and violent attacks, and that upon any sudden agitation, it would suddenly cease to beat and leave no no sign of life in the bosom of the innocent sufferer. That when the painful spasms had passed away, the force of nature once more expressed itself by strong pulsations, whose violence was now as painful to the child, as their apparent cessation had formerly proved.

Wilhelm remembered having witnessed one of these attacks, and Natalia referred him for further information to the physician, who, she said, would explain to him the reason why they had desired the presence of the child's friend and

benefactor. "You will find her wonderfully altered," continued Natalia, "she has even taken a fancy to wearing female apparel, to which she formerly entertained so strong an aversion."

"How have you succeeded in this?" inquired Wilhelm.

"However desirable it may long have been," she replied, "we have only succeeded by the merest accident. But you must hear how it occurred. You are doubtless aware that I always have a number of young maidens about me, whose growing dispositions for every thing that is good and right I endeavour to cultivate. From my lips they never hear anything but what I myself believe to be true, although I cannot prevent them from hearing many things from other persons, which are tinged with error, and with worldly prejudice. In answering their inquiries upon such subjects, I endeavour, as far as possible, to correct their strange and incorrect ideas with some admitted truth, and thus to render them useful, or at least harmless. Some time ago my girls had heard from the peasant children certain wonderful tales of angels, of the Knecht Rupert and of other visionary forms that had appeared, at certain times, to reward good children, and to punish those who were disobedient. They had an idea that they were human beings in disguise. I encouraged this notion, and without convincing them by proofs, I determined upon the first favourable opportunity to amuse them with a spectacle of the kind. The birth-day of two twin sisters, whose conduct had always been irreproachable, was drawing near, and I promised them that an angel should upon that occasion distribute the presents which they had so well deserved. They were impatient for the expected day. I had engaged Mignon to perform the part, and when the time arrived, she was appropriately dressed in a light flowing drapery of white. Nothing was deficient, even the golden girdle round her waist, and a similar diadem upon her head. At first I felt disposed to omit the wings, but the ladies who dressed her, insisted on providing a pair of large golden pinions, upon which they seemed determined to display their taste. Thus adorned, carrying a lily in one hand, and a basket in the other, this strange apparition suddenly became visible amongst the children, and excited in their minds, no less than in my own,

feelings of the utmost astonishment. "Behold the Angel!" I exclaimed. The children started back at first, but at length they cried, "It is Mignon!" and yet they feared to approach the wonderful figure.

"Here are your presents!" she said, presenting the basket to them. They gathered round her, gazed, felt, and at length inquired—

"Art thou an angel?"

"I would I were," replied Mignon.

"Why dost thou bear a lily?"

"If my heart were as pure and open—then I should be happy."

"What wings are those? Let us see them."

"They represent others, which are not yet unfolded."

Thus did she reply significantly to each light and innocent inquiry. When the curiosity of the little party had been satisfied, and the impression of the angel's visit had abated, they proceeded to undress Mignon. But she resisted, and taking her cithern, she seated herself upon this high writing table, and commenced the following ballad, which she sang with incredible sweetness.

Thus let me seem—till thus I be,
These snow-white garments ne'er deny,
From this bright world I soon shall flee
To an enduring home on high.

A little while I there shall rest,
With vision pure and open mind,
In robes of white no longer drest
My wreath and garland left behind.

In heavenly realms, the angel choir
Seek not to know of youth or maid,
Freed from this lowly earth's attire,
Their limbs in robes of light array'd.

My lot hath been devoid of care,
Yet is my bosom rent with pain,
Untimely grief hath been my share,
Then, O! restore my youth again.

"I determined," continued Natalia, "to permit her to

retain the dress, and to procure some others for her of the same kind. She wears them now, and they seem to give her quite a different expression."

As it was growing late, Natalia allowed Wilhelm to depart, but it was not without some apprehension that he separated from her. "Is she married or not?" he asked himself. He had been afraid, at every sound, that some door would open and her husband appear. The servant who conducted him to his apartment, retired before he could summon courage to make inquiries on this subject. His agitation kept him awake for a considerable time, and he employed himself in comparing the figure of his Amazon with the appearance of his new acquaintance. But he could not make them thoroughly agree. The former he had at once fashioned -- but the latter seemed as if it would fashion him.

CHAPTER III.

On the following morning when all was silent and quiet, he proceeded to examine the house. It was the cleanest, the noblest and most beautiful building he had ever seen. "True art," he exclaimed, "resembles good company, it compels us, in the most delightful manner, to admit the extent to which our inward faculties have been cultivated. The impression, which the statues and busts of his grandfather produced upon his mind, was most agreeable. It was with real delight that he surveyed the picture of the sick King's son, he still found it charming and affecting. The servant admitted him into various other apartments, amongst which were a library, a museum and a cabinet of natural curiosities. With many of the objects he was wholly unacquainted. Felix, in the mean time, had awoke, and was searching for him. He felt grieved at the thought of how, and when, he might receive Theresa's letter, he dreaded the prospect of meeting Mignon, or even of seeing Natalia. How different

was his present state of mind from what it had been, when he had dispatched his letter to Theresa, and had devoted himself with so much gladness to that noble being.

Natalia invited him to breakfast. He was ushered into an apartment, where several neatly attired maidens, all as it appeared under ten years of age, were engaged in laying out a little table, whilst another similar person was carrying in various descriptions of beverage.

Wilhelm attentively examined a picture which was hanging over the sofa. He could not help recognizing it as the portrait of Natalia, though he was dissatisfied with it as a work of art. But upon the appearance of Natalia herself, the resemblance wholly vanished. He was glad however to perceive a religious cross upon its breast, and Natalia herself wore a similar ornament.

"I have examined that picture," he observed to her, "and I have felt surprised how a painter could be so true and yet so false at the same time. The portrait bears a general resemblance to you, but it expresses neither your features nor your character."

"I am only astonished," replied Natalia, "that it bears so great a resemblance to me. For it is not my portrait, but that of an aunt, whom I resembled when I was a child. It was painted when she was about my present age, and at first sight every one thinks that it was intended for me. I wish you had known that excellent lady. I feel so deeply indebted to her. A very delicate state of health, too much solitary contemplation, and her moral and religious anxiety, prevented her from exhibiting to the world those qualities which she might otherwise have displayed. She was a light which shone only upon a few friends, but especially upon me."

'Is it possible?" said Wilhelm, after brief reflection, during which he perceived that many things accurately corresponded; "is it possible that that fair and noble Saint, whose gentle confessions have been communicated to me, could have been your aunt?"

"Have you perused that manuscript?" inquired Natalia.

"Yes!" replied Wilhelm, "with the deepest sympathy, and not without an effect upon my life. What I most admired in those confessions was the purity of being, not only

of herself, but of everything that surrounded her, the independence of her nature, and the impossibility that she could receive any impression which was not in complete harmony with her noble, lovely mind."

"You are more just towards this inimitable being than many others who have read her manuscript. Every refined person knows how many natural defects he has had to struggle against, both in himself and others, what exertions his own education has cost him, and how disposed he has been in general to think of himself alone, and wholly to forget the claims of others. How frequently does a good man upbraid himself for having proved deficient in kindness, and when a fair nature cultivates itself too tenderly, too conscientiously, or if I may use the expression, over-cultivates itself, it can find no patience, no toleration in the world. Such beings are to us externally, what the Ideal is to us internally—examples not so much to imitate, as to call forth the exertion of our powers. We smile at the order and cleanliness of the Dutch, but how could our friend Theresa have become what she is, if the example of their household arrangements had not been ever present to her mind."

"Then I find in Theresa's friend," cried Wilhelm, "the same Natalia, to whom her kind relation was so much attached, the same Natalia who has been from her earliest youth so sympathizing, so affectionate and so tender-hearted. A nature like hers could only descend from such a race! What a prospect opens before me, when in the same moment I take a view of your ancestors, and of the whole circle to which you belong!"

"Yes!" replied Natalia, "and you could not procure a more correct idea of us anywhere than what the story of my aunt will furnish. It is true that her attachment for me has always caused her to praise me too highly. But in expressing our opinion of a child, we do not speak so much of the object before us, as give expression to our hopes."

Wilhelm had, in the mean time, hastily recollected that he had become acquainted with the circumstances of Lothario's youth and early education. The beautiful Countess too appeared to him as a child with the pearls of her aunt about her neck, and he had been once in close proximity

to those pearls, when her sweet and lovely lips had bent down to meet his own—he sought to banish these remembrances by having recourse to other thoughts. He then turned to the friend with whom that manuscript had made him acquainted. "And do I find myself at this moment," he exclaimed, "in the house of your worthy uncle? But it is not so much a house as a temple, of which you are the Priestess—nay, the very Genius. Never shall I forget the impression which yesterday evening produced upon my mind, when I entered and saw all those well-remembered works of art again before me. I thought of the marble statues in Mignon's song, but they did not mourn over me, they beheld me with a look of deep earnestness, and connected the days of my earliest youth with that identical moment. Among so many other noble works, I see here that ancient family treasure, that delight of my grandfather, and I find myself here also, my unworthy self, whom nature had made the dearest favourite of that good old man, but alas! with what associations and in what society!"

Natalia's young pupils had in the meanwhile retired from the apartment to pursue their several employments. Wilhelm, who had been left alone with Natalia, was invited to explain his last observations more clearly. His statement that the most valuable portion of her works of art had once belonged to his grandfather imparted a cheerful intimacy to their conversation. He had not only become acquainted with her family through the manuscript, but he found himself at the present moment in the midst of his own inheritance. He now expressed a wish to see Mignon. Natalia begged him to wait until the physician should return, as he had been summoned to attend a patient in the neighbourhood. We may readily conjecture that he was the same active little man with whom we are already acquainted, and who had been adverted to in the Confessions of a fair Saint.

"As I now find myself," said Wilhelm, "in the midst of this family circle, I presume the Abbé who is mentioned in that manuscript is the same mysterious inexplicable personage, whom after so many strange adventures I once more met in your brother's house. Perhaps you can give me some further information about him."

Natalia replied that much might be said of the Abbé.

"I know him best," she continued, "from the influence which he has exerted upon our education. He was convinced, at least for a time, that all education should be adapted to the disposition. I cannot say whether he has altered his opinions. He was accustomed to maintain, that the principal duty of man consisted of activity, and that we could achieve nothing, unless a peculiar talent and instinct impelled us to the performance of our tasks. 'It is admitted,' he would say, 'that men must be born poets, and the same necessity is allowed with respect to all who excel in works of art, as the perfections of nature cannot be successfully assumed. But upon close examination we shall find that even our slightest talents must come to us from nature, as man possesses no vague capabilities. Nothing renders our lives unsuccessful but the ambiguous and uncertain system of our education, which awakens wishes instead of directing impulses, and in place of forwarding real talent, leads our exertions to objects with which our minds are generally in discord. A child, a youth who goes astray in a path which he has chosen for himself, is more likely to succeed, than many who never deviate from a course which has been chosen for them by others. For if the former, either by their own guidance, or through the instrumentality of strangers, find the path which is congenial to their nature, they will pursue it consistently, whilst the latter are in incessant danger of throwing off a foreign yoke, and abandoning themselves to their own freedom.'"

"It is somewhat singular," said Wilhelm, "that I should have had some dealings with this extraordinary man, and that he should, in his own way, have guided me for a time, or at least confirmed me in my errors. I must wait with patience, to see how he will explain his conduct, in having in conjunction with others, made me an object of perfect ridicule."

"I have no reason," said Natalia, "to complain of his peculiar fancies, for they have succeeded better with me, than with the other members of our family. Though I do not see how my brother Lothario could have been more advantageously educated. Perhaps my sister, the Countess, ought to have been managed differently, as it would have been better to have infused more strength and earnestness

into her character. But as for our brother Friedrich, I dare not think of what may be his fate—he will doubtless have become the victim of the delusive educational system."

"Have you then another brother?" inquired Wilhelm.

"Truly I have," replied Natalia; "a merry, light-hearted youth, who has never been restrained in his wish to wander through the world, and I know not what may be the consequence of his wildness and dissipation. I have not seen him for a long time. But it comforts me to know that the Abbé, and all my brother's friends, frequently receive news of him and his occupations."

Wilhelm wished to question Natalia further about her brother and his companions, with a view of ascertaining her own sentiments, when the physician arrived, and after an interchange of compliments, began to discourse of Mignon's condition.

Natalia, taking Felix by the hand, said she would conduct him to Mignon, and prepare her for a visit from her friend.

When the physician found himself alone with Wilhelm, he thus began. "I have some strange things to tell you, of which indeed you can have but little idea. Natalia has left us, in order that we may be able more unreservedly to speak of various matters, which, although they have been communicated by herself, cannot in her presence be so freely discussed. The whole nature of the child seems exhausted by a feeling of the most intense longing. Her only earthly wishes are once more to see her native land and to possess you. Both these feelings appear to lie at an immeasurable distance before her, and to be almost unattainable. Her home is probably in the neighbourhood of Milan, from whence, in very early youth, she was decoyed away by a company of rope dancers. She can communicate no further information about herself, partly because she was then too young to remember the names either of persons or places, and especially because she has taken an oath never to inform any living mortal of her parentage or abode. For the persons by whom she was found wandering, and to whom she accurately described her dwelling, and with piercing cries implored them to conduct her home, carried her off the more rapidly on that account, and at night, in their quarters, they spoke of their valuable prize, and declared it

to be impossible that she could ever find her way back. The little innocent then fell into a state of the most dreadful despair, in which the Holy Virgin appeared to her and assured her that she would protect her. She thereupon swore a solemn oath to herself, that for the future she would place confidence in no one, that she would impart her history to no human being, and that she would live and die in the hope of obtaining direct assistance from heaven. And even this information she did not expressly communicate to Natalia, but the latter has rather gathered it from detached expressions, songs, and childish observations, which have indistinctly betrayed what she would willingly have concealed."

Wilhelm was now able to understand many of the songs and mysterious expressions of the affectionate child. And he implored the physician not to withhold from him any of the strange poetry or confessions of so singular a being.

"Well," said the physician, "prepare for an unexpected communication, a story with which you, without being conscious of it, are intimately connected, and which I fear has been decisive for the life or death of this good creature."

"Let me hear it," said Wilhelm; "I am beyond measure impatient."

"Do you remember," inquired the physician, "a certain secret nocturnal visit from a stranger after your performance of Hamlet?"

"I remember it well," answered Wilhelm, with a blush, "but I did not expect to be reminded of it at the present moment."

"Do you know who it was?"

"No! but you alarm me. You cannot mean Mignon. Who was it? Tell me."

"I do not know myself."

"Then it was not Mignon?"

"No certainly not. But Mignon had intended, at the time to visit you, and saw with horror from the spot where she lay concealed, a rival occupy her place."

"A rival!" exclaimed Wilhelm. "Explain yourself; you amaze me."

"Be satisfied that with my assistance you can learn the result so easily. Natalia and I, who have felt but a slight interest upon this subject, have been sufficiently distressed

at discovering the perplexed condition of this good creature, whom we have been so anxious to assist. Her attention had been attracted by some thoughtless expressions of Philina and some of her companions, as well as by a song of the former, in which she celebrated the praises of the night, and she felt desirous of passing the night in company with a person whom she loved, without any other desire than to enjoy a happy and secure repose. A feeling of attachment to you reigned so powerfully within her breast, and within your arms she had found relief from so many sorrows, that she wished to realize this happiness in all its fulness. At first she had thought of asking this favour of you in a friendly manner, but a secret reluctance had prevented her. At length however, that merry evening, and the excitement of a more than usual quantity of wine, had inspired her with courage to make the bold attempt, and to approach your bed. She had therefore gone before you to conceal herself in your apartment, but when she was ascending the stairs, she heard a noise, and hid herself, when she perceived a female figure clad in white, steal into your chamber. You arrived yourself a short time after, and she heard you bolt the door.

"Mignon then suffered indescribable agony. All the violent sensations of passionate jealousy, mingled with the mysterious longings of obscure desire, exerted a strong influence upon her half developed nature. Her heart, which had hitherto beaten violently with anxious expectation, became almost still, and oppressed her bosom with its leaden weight. She breathed with difficulty, and knew not where to seek relief, till hearing the sound of the old man's harp, she hastened to his garret, and amid the most frightful convulsions, she spent the night at his feet"

The physician paused for a moment, but as Wilhelm continued silent, he proceeded: "Natalia has assured me that no incident of her whole life had so much alarmed and affected her, as the state of Mignon whilst she was relating this occurrence, and our noble friend upbraided herself for having elicited this confession from her, and thus renewed the sorrows of the gentle maiden."

"'The kind creature,' continued Natalia, 'had scarcely reached this point of her narrative, or rather of her replie

to my direct questions, than she suddenly fell down at my feet, and pressing her hand to her bosom, complained of the returning pains of that dreadful night. She writhed upon the ground, and I was obliged to summon all my resolution to apply those remedies for the recovery of her mind and body, with which I was acquainted."

"You reduce me to a painful condition," cried Wilhelm, "by making me feel so sensible of my repeated injustice to Mignon, at the very moment when I am proposing to visit her. If I am to see her again, why do you deprive me of the courage to meet her without apprehension? But shall I confess it to you? that as her mind seems so affected, I cannot think that my presence will prove beneficial to her. If it is your opinion, as a physician, that the illness arising from her extreme longing, has so far injured her constitution as to threaten death, why should I renew her sorrows by my presence, and perhaps hasten the termination of her existence?"

"My friend," continued the physician, "where we cannot cure, we are bound at least to alleviate, and I could furnish the most convincing proofs, that the presence of a beloved object can deprive the imagination of its evil powers, and can convert a consuming longing into the repose of peaceful contemplation. We should do everything with moderation and judgment. It is true that such a presence can sometimes revive an almost extinguished passion. But go, and see the dear child; be kind to her, and let us await the result with patience."

Natalia returned at that moment, and requested Wilhelm to accompany her to Mignon, saying, "She appears to be very happy with Felix, and I hope she will receive her friend kindly." Wilhelm followed her with some reluctance. He was deeply affected at the accounts which he had heard, and feared that he might have to witness a passionate scene. But his interview was of the very opposite description.

Mignon was dressed in long white female attire, and with her rich brown hair, partly knotted and partly streaming in curls over her shoulders, she was sitting with Felix in her lap, and she pressed him tenderly to her heart; and whilst she resembled a departed spirit, the boy was life itself. It seemed as if heaven and earth were embracing. With a

smile she extended her hand to Wilhelm. "I thank you for restoring Felix to me. I know not how they had enticed him away, and since then I have never enjoyed my existence. And whenever my heart feels any want upon earth, Felix shall fill the void."

The tranquillity with which Mignon had received her friend, gave great satisfaction to the whole party. The physician begged that Wilhelm would visit her frequently, and that her peace, both of mind and of body, might be uninterruptedly attended to. He withdrew almost immediately, but promised to return in a short time.

Wilhelm had an opportunity now of observing Natalia within the limits of her own circle. He could enjoy no greater happiness than to live in her society. Her presence produced the most beneficial effect upon the girls, and the young ladies of various ages, who either resided with her in the house, or came to visit her from the neighbourhood

"The course of your existence," observed Wilhelm, "has doubtless been smooth and undisturbed, and your aunt's description of your childhood seems to agree with your present condition. We may easily see that your path has never been entangled. You have never felt the necessity of retracing your steps."

"I am indebted for this," replied Natalia, "to my uncle, and the Abbé, who have so well understood my peculiarities. I do not remember during my whole life having experienced a stronger wish than to discover the necessities of others that I might relieve them. The child who was unable to walk, the bed-ridden old man, the anxiety of a rich family for offspring, the inability of the poor to support their children, the secret anxiety of many for employment, the impulse to cultivate some particular talent, the ability to follow a hundred little necessary pursuits, to discover these, seemed to be my natural mission. I could perceive them in places to which my attention had never been directed, and I seemed to have been born for the purpose of making such discoveries. The charms of inanimate nature, to which so many others are keenly sensitive, produced no impression upon me, and the charms of art I valued even less. My most agreeable occupation was to search out want and distress, and to discover and apply a remedy for their alleviation.

"When I beheld a poor creature in rags, I immediately remembered the superfluous clothes which filled the wardrobes of my friends; when I saw children pining away for want of care or food, I thought of the many ladies whom I knew to be oppressed with tedium amidst their countless luxuries and riches, and when I saw throngs of persons confined in narrow habitations, I thought that they ought to be provided for, in the spacious palaces and unoccupied rooms of large mansions. This mode of beholding things was quite natural to me, so that I made constant errors in my childhood, and perplexed my friends with my unreasonable proposals. It was another peculiarity of mine that I could with difficulty consider money as the proper means of relieving any of these evils. All my favours were rendered in kind, and I am perfectly aware that in consequence of this, many a laugh was indulged at my expense. The Abbé alone appeared to understand me, he yielded to my wishes upon every occasion, he made me acquainted with my wants and desires, and taught me how to gratify them with propriety."

"And have you then," asked Wilhelm, "in the education of your little female world, adopted the principles of those extraordinary men? Do you suffer the dispositions of the children to form themselves? Do you permit them to search and wander and commit mistakes, allowing them to reach the goal at last, or leave them to perish in their errors?"

"No," answered Natalia, "such a mode of education would be quite contrary to my principles. He who affords no assistance at the proper time, in my opinion, never helps at all; and he who withholds his advice at the needful juncture, never counsels. I also think it necessary to promulgate certain laws, and impress them upon the minds of children, that they may the better comprehend the object of their existence. Yes, I would almost say that it is better to go astray by rule, than to err in obedience to the caprices of our disposition, and according to my view of mankind, there always seems to me to be a want in our nature, which a distinctly enunciated law alone can supply."

"Your system, then," observed Wilhelm, "differs altogether from the plan which is followed by our friends."

"Yes," answered Natalia, "and they afford a noble example of toleration, in their refusal to interfere with my

principles. They allow me to pursue my own course, because it is my own, and they assist me to accomplish all my wishes."

We must postpone a circumstantial detail of Natalia's system to a more favourable opportunity.

Mignon had frequently begged to be admitted into their society, and they yielded to her request the more readily, as she seemed to be again growing reconciled to Wilhelm. Her heart was opening to him once more, and she was daily becoming more happy and cheerful. During their walks, as she was easily fatigued, she loved to lean upon his arm. "Now," he would say, "she leaps and climbs no more, and yet she feels the wish to ascend to the mountain top, to skip from house to house, and to sport from tree to tree. How enviable are the birds, especially when in the enjoyment of sweet and social intercourse they build their nests."

Mignon soon acquired the habit of inviting Wilhelm daily into the garden. And when he was engaged or absent, Felix supplied his place, and if she seemed at times to lose all earthly consciousness, yet at other moments, she was so firmly attached to both father and son, that she seemed to dread a separation from them more than any other calamity.

Natalia appeared thoughtful. "It was our object," she said, "to open her kind and affectionate heart by means of your presence. I do not know whether we have acted wisely." She paused, and seemed to expect that Wilhelm would make some answer. He felt apprehensive that, under present circumstances, his marriage with Theresa would be extremely afflicting to Mignon, but he did not venture in his uncertainty to give expression to this thought, and he had no suspicion that Natalia was already aware of his intention.

And he found it equally impossible to converse with freedom, when his noble friend spoke about her sister, praised her good qualities, and deplored her present condition. He was no less perplexed when Natalia informed him that the Countess was shortly expected to arrive. "Her husband," she said, "has no other intention than to replace the departed Count, who was Principal of the Herrnhuther community, and by activity and vigilance to extend and maintain that noble institution. He is coming with the Countess to bid us farewell; he intends, then, to visit the various localities where the community have settled. All his wishes are com-

plied with, and I almost think that he will take my poor sister with him to America, in order more closely to imitate his predecessor. And as he seems convinced at present that he wants but little to become a saint, perhaps the thought has sometimes floated through his soul, that he would even cheerfully embrace the glories of a martyr."

CHAPTER IV.

THERESA had frequently been the subject of conversation among our friends, and many were the indirect allusions that had been made to her, and Wilhelm had been often tempted to confess that he had already offered her his heart and hand. But a certain feeling, for which he could not account, had hitherto restrained him, until at length Natalia, with that heavenly, modest, cheerful smile, which so became her, addressed him thus: "I am compelled, then, to break this silence, and to force myself into your confidence. Why, my friend, do you make a secret of a circumstance which is of so much importance to you, and so deeply interests myself?—You have offered your hand to my friend. It is not without invitation that I interfere in the matter—here are my credentials—here is a letter which she has written to you, and has transmitted through my hand."

"A letter from Theresa!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, Wilhelm! and your fate is now decided. Let me congratulate you, no less than my dear friend." Wilhelm was silent and gazed intently upon vacancy. Natalia looked at him; she saw that he was pale. "Your joy is strong," she said, "it takes the form of terror, and deprives you of the power of utterance. My sympathy is not the less cordial, because it compels me to give utterance to my thoughts. I hope you will prove grateful to me, for I must inform you that my influence with Theresa has not been small. She sought my advice, and as you were fortunately here, I was enabled to overcome the few doubts which my friend still entertained. Our notes were rapidly interchanged—and here is her decision—here is her determination. And now you shall peruse all her letters. You shall look with a clear eye into the fair heart of your bride."

Wilhelm opened the letter which had been handed to him unsealed. It contained the following affectionate words.

"I am yours as I am, and as you know me. I call you mine as you are, and as I know you. Whatever either in ourselves or in our circumstances, marriage may alter, we will endeavour to arrange by reason, cheerful courage, and good will. As it is not passion, but attachment and confidence which have brought us together, we incur less risk than a thousand others. You will, doubtless, bear with me, if I sometimes affectionately remember my former friend, and in return I will press your son to my heart as if I were his mother. If you will consent to share my humble dwelling, it is yours, and in the meantime the purchase of your estate may be concluded. I should wish, however, that no further steps were taken in the matter without my assistance, to prove that I deserve the confidence which you have bestowed upon me. Farewell, my dear, dear friend! beloved bridegroom! honoured husband! Theresa embraces you with hope and joy. Natalia will tell you more, will tell you everything."

Wilhelm, who beheld his Theresa fully represented in this letter, had now completely recovered his composure. During its perusal the most rapid thoughts alternated within his soul. With indignation he observed in his heart the most undoubted traces of an inclination for Natalia. He condemned himself, and pronounced every such idea to be madness, he thought of Theresa in all her perfection, he read her letter again, and he became more cheerful, or rather he recovered so far that he could appear cheerful. Natalia now gave him the letters which she had interchanged with Theresa, and from them we shall extract a few passages.

When Theresa had concluded a description of her husband, she continued thus.

"Such is my idea of the man who has just offered me his hand. His own opinion of himself you will learn at some future time, from the papers, in which he has delineated himself to me with perfect candour. I am convinced that with him I shall find happiness."

"As for rank, you have long known my thoughts upon that subject. Some persons keenly feel the disagreement of out-

ward circumstances. I have no wish to alter the opinion of others, but I will act according to my own convictions. I do not intend to set an example to others, though I am not acting without an example. I fear nothing but interior disagreements—a vessel which is not adapted for its contents—great display and little enjoyment—riches and avarice—nobility and rudeness—youth and pedantry—want and ceremony—these are the things which would annihilate me, let the world prize and value them as it may."

"In hoping that we shall suit each other, I ground my expectations upon the belief that he resembles you, my dear Natalia, you, a being whom I prize and reverence so highly. Yes, like you he possesses that noble wish to search and strive after the Best, by which we produce the Good, which we hope to find elsewhere. How often have I not silently censured you, because your conduct towards certain friends, or your behaviour, in certain cases, has been different from what my own would have been, and yet the result has always proved that you were right. You have been accustomed to say, that by dealing with men as they are, we make them worse, but by treating them as if they really were what they ought to be, we improve them as far as it is possible. I know that I can neither see things thus, nor can I act in this manner. Penetration, order, discipline, command, are my peculiar gifts. I well remember Jarno's expression, 'Theresa drills her pupils—Natalia instructs them.' Indeed, upon one occasion, he went so far as to deny that I possessed any of those indispensable virtues, faith, hope, or love. 'Instead of faith,' he said, "she has penetration—instead of love, constancy—and instead of hope, she has trust.' I will even admit, that before I knew you, I thought the most valuable qualities in the world were clear-sightedness and prudence, but now your presence has pervaded, animated and conquered me, and I willingly yield the preference to your pure and exalted soul. In the same sense I honour my distinguished friend. The history of his life is a perpetual seeking, without being able to find, but his has not been an empty seeking, but a wonderful and generous toil, and he has always hoped to obtain from others, what could only proceed from himself. And so, love, my clear sighted-

ness has not injured me in the present instance. I know my husband better than he has known himself, and, therefore, I value him more highly. I see him and I understand him, but all my penetration cannot tell me how much he is capable of accomplishing. When I think of him, his image always appears to me in conjunction with yours, and I know not how I have proved worthy to possess two such friends. But I will become worthy of them, by devoting myself to my duty, by fulfilling all that is expected from me."

"'Do I think of Lothario?' Vividly and daily. He is never one moment absent from the society of those beings who live in my remembrance. O! how I lament that that excellent man, who is related to me by an error of youth, should have been connected with you by ties of nature. In very truth a being, such as you are, would have been more worthy of him than I can be. I would have surrendered him to you. Let us be to him all that is possible, until he find a worthy wife, and let us then continue perpetually together."

"But what will our friends say?" observed Natalia. "My brother knows nothing of the event—not in the least—the entire affair has been managed for once by us women. I know not the fancies with which Lydia has contrived to imbue Theresa, but she seems to mistrust both the Abbé and Jarno. Lydia has hinted some suspicions of secret engagements and plans, of which I have heard in a general manner, without wishing to inquire into them more particularly, and in this decisive step of her life, she has not wished that any other person than myself should influence her. She had previously arranged with my brother that they should mutually inform each other of their union, without consulting with any one upon the subject."

Natalia now addressed a letter to her brother, and invited Wilhelm to add a few words, in compliance with the wish of Theresa. They were about to seal it, when Jarno was unexpectedly announced. He was received as kindly as possible, he looked cheerful and merry, and could not long avoid saying, "I have come to acquaint you with a strange but pleasant piece of news, which concerns our Theresa. You have often blamed us, dear Natalia, for troubling ourselves

about so many matters, but you will now admit the advantage of having our spies every where. Guess—and prove your sagacity for once."

The confidence with which he said this, the cunning look with which he surveyed Wilhelm and Natalia, convinced them both that their secret had been discovered. Natalia answered with a smile, "We are more clever than you think, and have already committed to paper the solution of your riddle, even before you have proposed it."

With these words she handed him the letter to Lothario, and felt satisfied at having so successfully prevented the surprise which had been intended for them. Jarno took the letter with some astonishment, read it quickly, started, let it fall from his hands, and stared at them with an expression of surprise and alarm, to which he was wholly unaccustomed. He did not utter a word.

Wilhelm and Natalia were petrified. Jarno paced restlessly up and down the room. "What shall I say?" he exclaimed, "or rather shall I tell what has happened? It cannot remain a secret, and the difficulty cannot be avoided. Therefore, secret for secret! Surprise for surprise! Theresa is not the daughter of her supposed mother. The obstacle is removed, and I have come hither to beg you will prepare for her marriage with Lothario."

Jarno observed the astonishment of them both, although they bent their eyes upon the ground. "The present case," he said, "is one of those in which the company of others is distressing. It is better that each person should indulge his own reflections in private, and I, at least, beg that I may retire for a short time." He hastened into the garden, and Wilhelm followed him mechanically at some distance.

After the lapse of an hour, they were again assembled. Wilhelm commenced by observing. "Formerly, when I was living without any object or plan of life, in a state of levity and indifference, friendship, love, attachment and confidence met me with open arms, and even forced themselves upon me. But now when I wish to be serious, fate appears to treat me very differently. My determination to offer my hand to Theresa, is perhaps the only resolution which has ever come pure and unbidden from my heart. I formed my plans with deliberation, my reason approved it, and with

the consent of the dearly loved maiden, all my hopes were fulfilled. But now the strangest fate rejects my outstretched hand. Theresa extends her own to me as in a dream, but I cannot grasp it, and the lovely image vanishes for ever. So, farewell, thou dearest image, and all my hopes of bliss and happiness which gathered around thee!"

He remained silent for an instant, and Jarno was about to answer him. "Let me add one word more," said Wilhelm, "for the die which is about to be cast will affect my whole existence. In this moment I feel the full effect of the impression which Lothario's presence first produced upon me, and which has never left my mind. He is worthy of the warmest friendship and affection, and without some sacrifice, no friendship can be proved. For his sake, I found it easy to deceive a helpless maiden, and for his sake, I shall find it possible to renounce a bride. Go, then, inform him of the singular event which has occurred, and tell him for what I am prepared."

Jarno remarked, "In cases of this nature, I hold it important that nothing should be rashly done. Let us take no step without Lothario's consent. I will go to him at once, and wait patiently for my return or for his letter."

He rode away, and left his friends in the greatest distress of mind. They had time now to reflect upon past events, and to draw their own inferences from them. They remembered now for the first time, that they had received Jarno's singular announcement without inquiring into any of the attendant circumstances. Wilhelm began to entertain his doubts, when to their great astonishment and perplexity, a messenger arrived from Theresa on the following day, and was the bearer of a letter to Natalia.

"Strange as it may appear, I must write another letter to beg that you will send my husband to me without delay. He shall be my husband in spite of the plans which they are contriving to deprive me of him. Give him the enclosed letter—but not before witnesses of any kind."

The letter to Wilhelm was as follows:

"What will you think of your Theresa, if she now insists passionately upon a union, which the most calm reflection seemed alone to have inspired? Let nothing prevent you from setting out immediately upon receipt of this letter.

Come, come, my dear, dear friend, now three times dearer, since they are endeavouring to deprive me of you."

"What is to be done?" cried Wilhelm, when he had perused this letter.

Natalia replied, after some reflection, "I never remember my heart and judgment to be so completely silent as at present. I know not how to act, or what to suggest."

"Is it possible," asked Wilhelm, "that Lothario can be ignorant of what has happened, or if he knows it, can he be like ourselves, the mere sport of some concealed design? Could Jarno have devised the plot immediately upon reading our letter? Might he not have given us some other information, if we had not been so hasty? What can they mean, or what can their intentions be? Can Theresa have formed any plan? It cannot be denied that Lothario is the victim of secret plots and contrivances; I have myself observed how active the persons are by whom he is surrounded, they influence the proceedings and destiny of many individuals, whom they manage to guide. I do not know what may be their ultimate object, but I can plainly see that their present purpose is to deprive me of Theresa. On one side, I behold the prospect of Lothario's happiness, which may be but a fiction, and on the other, I see my love, my honoured bride who invites me to her heart. What shall I do then?—how am I to act?"

"A little patience—a little time for reflection!" said Natalia. "In these strange entanglements I know too well, that a step which is irrevocable, should never be taken in haste. We can oppose constancy and prudence to their fables or their artful designs—and it cannot long remain doubtful whether the story which we have heard is true or false. If my brother really indulges hopes of concluding a marriage with Theresa, it would be cruel to destroy his happiness, at a moment when every thing seems to shine upon him. Let us first ascertain how much he knows, and inquire what he himself believes and hopes."

A letter from Lothario shewed the prudence of this advice. "I do not intend to send Jarno back to you," he wrote, "one line from my hand is of more value, than the longest message delivered by a stranger. I am convinced that Theresa is not the daughter of her reputed mother,

and I shall never resign the hope of possessing her, till she has been persuaded of this fact, and can then decide calmly between the claims of myself and my friend. Do not permit him to leave you, I implore. The happiness, the life of your brother is at stake. I promise that this uncertainty shall not long continue."

"You see the present condition of our business," she said, with a friendly voice to Wilhelm, "give me your word of honour that you will not leave the house."

"I give it," he cried, stretching out his hand, "I will not leave this house against your will. I thank God and my better genius that upon this occasion I am guided by you."

Natalia wrote an account of the whole occurrence to Theresa, declaring that she would not allow Wilhelm to leave her, and she enclosed Lothario's letter to her at the same time.

Theresa answered, "I am not a little surprised that Lothario should be himself convinced, for with his sister he could not surely practise dissimulation to this extent. I am distressed, beyond measure distressed. It is better that I should say no more. And my wisest course will be to go to you, when I have settled poor Lydia, who at present is enduring cruel treatment. I fear we have all been deceived, and shall continue to be so, beyond the possibility of explanation. If my friend thought as I do, he would contrive to effect his escape from you, and throw himself into the arms of his Theresa, from whom no person should ever afterwards detach him. But I fear that I shall lose him, without obtaining Lothario. They are depriving him of Lydia, holding out the delusion of a distant hope that he may yet succeed in obtaining me. I can say no more, the perplexity may become even greater. Time alone will shew whether our happy prospects may not be so injured, undermined, and shattered, that when the present mystery is cleared up, the evil may be irremediable. If my friend continues where he is at present, I shall come to you in a few days, and retain you near me. You wonder that passion should have thus overpowered your Theresa. But it is not passion, it is conviction that since Lothario never can be mine, this new friend may form the happiness of my life. Tell him this, in

the name of the little boy who sat with him under the oak tree, and delighted in his sympathy. Tell him this, in the name of Theresa, who received his proposals with the most cordial sincerity. My earliest dream of passing an existence with Lothario, has vanished from my soul—the dream of living with my new friend, engrosses my whole imagination. And am I so lightly esteemed, that it is thought an easy matter for me to renounce my present attachment?"

"I rely upon you," Natalia said to Wilhelm, as she handed him Theresa's letter. "Do not leave me. Think that I have placed the happiness of my life in your hands. My welfare is so bound up, and interwoven, with the happiness of my brother, that he can feel no pain which I do not likewise experience, no joy to which I can be a stranger. I may truly say that I have found, through him alone, that the heart may be affected and exalted, that in this world there may be joy, love and a feeling which contents the soul beyond its every want."

She paused. Wilhelm took her hand and exclaimed, "O, continue! this is the proper moment to express a true and mutual confidence; it is only necessary that we should understand each other."

"Yes, my friend!" she said, smiling with her easy, soft, and indescribable dignity, "it may not be an improper time for me to tell you, that all that which we have so often read in books, and which the world holds up to us, and designates as love, has ever appeared to me the veriest fable."

"You have never loved!" cried Wilhelm.

"Never or always!" replied Natalia.

CHAPTER V.

During this conversation, they had been walking in the garden. Natalia had gathered several strange flowers, which were quite new to Wilhelm, and of which he eagerly asked the names.

"You will scarcely guess," said Natalia, "for whom I have plucked these flowers. They are intended for my uncle, to whom we must pay a visit. The sun is shining at this moment

brightly upon the Hall of the Past, I must conduct you thither without delay, and I never visit that place without taking some flowers with me, which my uncle particularly loved. He was a singular man, and was susceptible of the strangest impressions. For certain plants and animals, for certain individuals and places, and even for certain sorts of minerals, he indulged a strong attachment, which it was almost impossible to explain. 'If I had not from my youth,' he was accustomed to say, 'resisted myself, and endeavoured to form my judgment upon broad and general principles, I should have been the most narrow-minded and intolerable of beings; for nothing can be more intolerable than trivial peculiarities in a person from whom one may expect a pure and proper activity.' Nevertheless, he was obliged to own that his life would have been in danger, if he had denied himself occasional indulgence, and prohibited the intense enjoyment of some things which he could neither praise nor defend. It is not my fault, he would say, if I have not been able to bring my judgment into complete harmony with my wishes. Upon such occasions, he would jest with me, and say, 'Natalia can be esteemed happy during her life time, her nature desires nothing which the world in general does not wish.'"

During their conversation they arrived at the building. She led him though a wide passage to a door, before which were reposing two sphinxes of granite. The door itself was constructed in the Egyptian fashion, a little narrower above than below, and the brazen sides prepared the visitor for a solemn and even gloomy feeling. Wilhelm, therefore, was agreeably surprised when this expectation changed to a sensation of happy cheerfulness, as they entered a hall in which art and life removed every idea of death and the grave. A succession of well proportioned arches had been sunk in the walls, in which some large sarcophaguses had been placed, in the intervening pillars, he observed some smaller niches, containing urns and funeral vessels; in other places, the surface of the walls had been divided into compartments, and between bright and variegated borders, he saw garlands, and other ornaments, together with cheerful and expressive figures painted upon panels of different sizes. The other parts of the building were decorated with beautiful yellow

marble, which passed into a reddish hue and mingling with blue lines, formed of a chemical composition, resembled azure stone, which while it satisfied the eye with the contrast, gave unity and connection to the whole. All the display of ornament was executed in the purest architectural taste, and the stranger, as he entered, felt himself exalted, and by the various combinations of art, he first perceived what man was, and what he might become.

Opposite the door, upon a noble sarcophagus, was seen the marble figure of a man reposing upon a pillow. He held a scroll in his hand, upon which he appeared to gaze with silent attention. It was so placed that one could easily read the words which were inscribed thereon. They were as follows—"Think of living."

Natalia, removing a withered garland, placed a fresh one before the image of her uncle—for he was the person whom the figure represented—and Wilhelm thought he could recognise the features of the old gentleman, whom he had formerly seen in the wood. "We have spent many hours together, in this spot," observed Natalia, "whilst this hall was being prepared. During his latter years he had collected some skilful artists around him, and his most favourite amusement consisted in inventing and arranging the drawings and cartoons for these paintings."

Wilhelm could not sufficiently enjoy the various objects by which he was surrounded. "What a life!" he exclaimed, "is this Hall of the Past! With equal propriety might we name it the Hall of the Present, or of the Future! For so every thing has been, and so every thing will be! Nothing is transitory, save the mortal who beholds and enjoys it all. This picture, of a mother pressing her infant to her heart, will live through many a generation of happy mothers. After centuries, perhaps, some father's heart will glow at the appearance of this aged man, who lays aside his earnestness and plays for a moment with his child. And thus will the bride blush for many a year, and seek amid her silent wishes for comfort and companionship. And thus will the impatient bridegroom pause upon the threshold, and listen whether he may enter."

Wilhelm beheld innumerable images around him. From the earliest cheerful impulse of childhood to employ its

limbs in play, to the quiet retired earnestness of the sage, he saw, in living order, how man possesses no natural capacity or talent, without devoting it to some practical purpose. From the first conscious feeling which induces the maiden to linger whilst she draws her pitcher from the fountain, and to behold her own image with inward satisfaction, to the high festivities when kings and people appeal before the altar to the gods to witness their alliances, all was delineated forcibly and with overpowering effect.

The spectators here were surrounded by a world, by a heaven, and in addition to the thoughts which these polished figures excited, besides the emotions which they awoke, there was some other inexpressible feeling present, by which the man was influenced. Wilhelm observed this, without being able to account for it—"What is it," he asked, "which independent of the meaning and sympathy with which human actions and adventures inspire us, acts so powerfully upon me at present? It speaks to me from the whole scene before me, and from every part of it, though I cannot apply to myself any thing that I behold. What enchantment do I not see in these surfaces, in these lines, these heights and breadths, these masses and colours? What is it that delights me in these figures, even when cursorily inspected as mere ornaments? Yes, I feel that we might linger here and rest, and view the whole and be happy, though our thoughts might turn to other subjects than the scenes before us."

And, in truth, could we only explain how happily every thing was divided, and arranged in its proper place, so as by combination, contrast, simplicity or variety, to produce a perfect and distinct effect, we should transport the reader to a scene, from which he would not willingly depart.

Four large candelabra stood in the corner of the hall, and four smaller ones in the middle, surrounding a beautifully carved sarcophagus, which from its appearance might once have contained a person of middle size.

Natalia paused for a moment near it, and placing her hand upon it, she observed, "My uncle had a great love for this ancient monument, he used frequently to say, 'It is not only the first blossoms that fall, such as you can preserve above in those other funeral urns, but the fruits, which hanging from the

bough, delude us with the fairest hopes, whilst a secret worm prepares their early ripeness for a quick decay.' I fear," she continued, "that his words may bear reference to the dear maiden, who seems gradually to be withdrawing from our cares, and inclining to this peaceful dwelling."

As they were about to take leave, Natalia said, "I must draw your attention to one thing more. Observe those semicircular openings in the ceiling. They were constructed to conceal the chorus of singers, and those brazen ornaments below the cornice, serve to fasten the tapestry, which, by direction of my uncle, must be used at every funeral. He could not exist without music, and especially without singing, but it was his peculiar taste that the singers never should be seen. He was accustomed to say, 'The theatre spoils us completely—there the music is intended for the eye, it accompanies motions, not emotions.' At oratorios and concerts the figure of the performer always distracts us —true music is for the ear; a fine voice is the most general idea which we can conceive, and whilst the petty individual who produces it appears before our eyes, the pure effect of the general idea is disturbed. I like to see the person with whom I converse, for he is a particular individual, whose form and character imparts value or worthlessness to his conversation—but whoever sings to me should be invisible, that his appearance may not confuse nor warp my judgment. In this case one human organ speaks to another—not spirit to spirit, nor a manifold world to the eye, nor a heaven to man. For this reason, he always required that instrumental music at a concert should be concealed as much as possible, as the mind becomes so perplexed and disturbed by the mechanical motions and awkward gestures of the performers. It was his delight to listen to music with his eyes closed, that his whole being might be concentrated upon the one pure enjoyment of the ear."

They were about to leave the hall, when the children ran violently through the passage, and they heard Felix exclaim, "No! I. No! I."

Mignon was the first to rush through the open door. She was breathless, and could not utter a word, but Felix, who was at a little distance, cried out, "Mamma Theresa is here!" The children, it appears, had run a race to bring

the news. Mignon was lying in Natalia's arms, and her heart beat violently.

"Naughty child!" said Natalia, "is not every violent exercise forbidden? See how your heart beats."

"Let it break!" replied Mignon with a deep sigh, "it has too long beaten already."

They had scarcely recovered from this sudden surprise and tumult, when Theresa entered. She ran to Natalia and embraced both her and Mignon. She then turned to Wilhelm, and looked at him with her clear eyes and said, "Well, my friend, what have you done? Have you allowed them to impose upon you?" He advanced towards her—she rushed to him, and hung upon his neck. "O, my Theresa!" he exclaimed.

"My friend, my love, my husband! yes, for ever your's," she cried amid the most affectionate kisses.

Felix seized her by the gown, and cried, "Mamma Theresa! I am also here." Natalia paused and looked on silently. Mignon suddenly pressed her left hand to her heart, and extending her right hand violently, she fell with a shriek apparently lifeless at Natalia's feet.

They were dreadfully alarmed. No motion of the head or pulse was perceptible. Wilhelm took her in his arms, and carried her hastily away; her body hung motionless over his shoulders. The presence of the doctor afforded them but little consolation—he and the young surgeon, to whom we have already alluded, exerted themselves in vain. The dear little creature could not be restored to life.

Natalia motioned to Theresa. The latter took her friend's hand, and conducted him from the room. He was silent—uttered not a syllable, and dared not meet her eyes. He sat down near her, upon the sofa, where he had met Natalia for the first time. He thought rapidly of the multitude of events which had happened, or rather he did not think, but allowed them to produce an effect upon his soul which he could not avoid.

There are moments in life in which circumstances, like winged shuttles, move backwards and forwards before us, and without ceasing, finish the web which we ourselves have prepared and partly spun. "My friend!" said Theresa, "my beloved!" breaking the silence and taking him by the hand, "Let us remain firmly united at this moment, as perhaps we

may often need to be, in similar cases. There are events which it requires the union of two hearts to bear. Reflect, my friend! remember that you are not alone—prove that you love your Theresa, by sharing your sorrows with her!" She embraced him and drew him close to her bosom. He clasped her in his arms, and pressed her tenderly to himself. "That poor child," he cried, "would in sorrowful moments seek refuge and protection in my inconstant heart. Let the firmness of your's now assist me in this dreadful hour." She held him locked in her embrace, he felt the beating of her heart against his own—but his soul was desolate and solitary—only the figures of Mignon and Natalia floated before his imaginatiou.

Natalia entered. "Give us your blessing!" cried Theresa, "and let us be united before you in this hour of sorrow." Wilhelm hid his face upon Theresa's neck; he felt happy that he was able to weep. He had not heard Natalia approach—he had not seen her, but at the sound of her voice his tears redoubled. "What God has joined, I will not put asunder," answered Natalia with a smile, "but it is not in my power to unite you, nor does it afford me pleasure to see that grief and sympathy have so completely banished the memory of my brother from your hearts." At these words Wilhelm tore himself from Theresa's arms. "Whither are you going?" they both exclaimed together. "Let me see the child whom I have murdered," he replied. "A misfortune upon which we look is less dreadful than one which oppresses the soul through the powers of imagination—let me, therefore, see the departed angel! Her serene look will tell me that she is happy." As they could not restrain the agitated youth, they accompanied him, but the doctor and the surgeon meeting them, prevented their intention. "Withdraw," they said, "from this sad spectacle, and permit us, as far as the resources of art will allow, to give some perpetuity to these remains. I will exercise all my power, not only to preserve the remains of this dear being, but to communicate to them an appearance of life. I foresaw her death, I have made all the necessary preparations, and with their assistance I cannot but succeed. Grant me a delay of a few days, and do not ask to see the child again, until she has been transferred to the Hall of the Past."

The young surgeon held in his hands the well known case of instruments. "From whom can he have obtained them?" Wilhelm asked the Doctor. "I knew them well," answered Natalia, "he received them from his father, who bound up your wounds in the forest."

"Then I have not been mistaken," cried Wilhelm, "I recognised the ribbon immediately. Procure it for me. It first brought me upon the trace of my benefactress. Through what happiness and misery will not such a lifeless thing as this endure! How much anguish has not this ribbon already witnessed, and yet its threads still hold together! How many a death pang has it not beheld, and yet it colours are not faded! It was near to me in one of the happiest hours of my existence, when I lay wounded on the ground, and your kind form appeared before me, and the child, whose untimely death we now bewail, was sitting near me, with its hair all bathed in blood, busied with the tenderest solicitude to save my life."

They were allowed but a short time to advert to this occurrence, and to answer Theresa's inquiries about the child, and the apparent cause of its sudden death, for the arrival of some visitors was announced, who when they had made their appearance proved not to be absolute strangers, for Lothario, Jarno, and the Abbé entered. Natalia advanced, to meet her brother, and the others preserved a momentary silence. Theresa then said, with a smile, to Lothario, "You scarcely expected to meet me here, at least our interview at the present moment had been better postponed, but, nevertheless, allow me, after so long an absence, to give you a cordial reception."

Lothario gave her his hand, and answered, "If we are destined to suffer and to part, it may as well occur in the presence of the being whom we love and whom we desire. I seek not to influence your decision, and my confidence in your heart, your understanding, and clear judgment, is so great, that I willingly place in your hands my own fate and that of my friend."

The conversation turned then upon general and unimportant subjects, and the company shortly afterwards separated into different parties for a walk. Natalia took Lothario, Theresa accompanied the Abbé, and Wilhelm remained with Jarno in the castle.

The appearance of these three friends, at a time when sorrow lay heavy upon Wilhelm's heart, had, instead of relieving his mind, only irritated and distressed him; he grew angry and fretful and made no secret of his ill temper, which occasioned Jarno to question him about the cause. "Why need I say more," he cried; "Lothario and his companions have arrived, and it would be strange if those mysterious inhabitants of the tower, who are so perpetually busy, should fail to exert their influence upon us. As far as I can judge of these persons, they always seem to be employed in endeavouring to separate what is united, or to unite what is separated. What sort of web they may eventually weave will, perhaps, remain for ever an enigma to our profane eyes."

"You are angry and satirical," cried Jarno; "that is well. If you were only in a proper passion it would even be better."

"And, perhaps, that may happen yet," answered Wilhelm, "and I rather fear that my natural good temper may be over irritated."

"And in the mean time," said Jarno, "until we see what is to be the end of our adventures, I can tell you something about the tower, which you seem to view with so much mistrust."

"You may act as you please," replied Wilhelm, "for my attention is wholly engaged. My mind is so perplexed at present that I can scarcely interest myself sufficiently in the subject."

"Your indifference," said Jarno, "shall not prevent me from giving an account of the matter. You consider me a clever fellow, and henceforth you shall reckon me an honest one, and what is more, I have now a commission to execute in reference to you" "I wish," observed Wilhelm, "that you were addressing me of your own accord, and with an honest wish to give me information, but, as I cannot listen to you without mistrust, why should I attend to you at all." "If I have no better task to execute," continued Jarno, "than to relate mere fairy tales, you at least have time to listen to me, and you may feel more disposed to do this, when I inform you that you saw nothing in the tower but the mere remains of a youthful amusement, in which the greater

part of the persons concerned, once took a deep interest, though we now only regard them with a smile."

"Then all your grave words and signs were mere delusions," cried Wilhelm. "With solemnity you conduct us to a place, whose very appearance inspires us with reverence, we there behold the strangest visions, you hand us parchments filled with noble and mysterious sayings, of which we can understand but little, we are informed that hitherto we have been pupils, you then declare us free, and we remain no wiser than we were before." "Have you got the parchment with you?" inquired Jarno; "it contains much wisdom. For those apparent proverbs were not written at random, though they may seem dark and meaningless to the unreflecting mind. But give me the Indenture, if it be in your possession."

"Here it is," said Wilhelm, "a charm of this nature should be worn near the heart." "Now," replied Jarno, with a smile, "who knows whether its contents may not one day be deemed worthy to find a place within your head?"

Jarno perused the first half of it rapidly. "These observations," he said, "refer to the cultivation of our taste for art—a topic which I shall leave to others; the remainder treats of life—a subject which I better understand."

He commenced to read several passages, making observations at intervals, and connecting them with remarks and anecdotes of his own. "The disposition of youth for secresy, for ceremony, and imposing words is extraordinary, and it is frequently a sign of a certain depth of character. We wish, at that period, to feel our whole being darkly and mysteriously moved. The youth who anticipates great things, expects to find mighty resources in what is secret, and hopes, by their means, to accomplish much. With such impressions the Abbé patronized a certain society of young men, partly from his friendly disposition, and partly because he had been formerly connected with a society which carried on its proceedings in secret. I did not relish these pursuits. I was older than the others, I had been frank and open from my youth, and loved candour beyond every thing. I wished to become acquainted with the world as it really was, and I gradually communicated my tastes to my companions, and this circumstance had almost changed our whole system, for

we now began to criticize the faults and deficiencies of others, and to esteem ourselves as the most perfect of human beings. The Abbé now came to our assistance, and taught us that we should never scrutinize the conduct of our neighbours without an anxiety for their improvement, and that activity alone would enable us to watch and judge ourselves. He recommended us, however, to adhere to the first form of our Society, and, therefore, there was an appearance of some regularity in our proceedings, in which, however, the first mysterious impressions of the whole were easily observable, and, subsequently, it assumed the form of an undertaking, whose object was to elevate the arts. Hence arose the terms Apprentices, Assistants, and Masters. We wished to examine every thing with our own eyes, and to keep a special record of our worldly experience. Hence arose the numerous confessions, which, in part, we wrote ourselves, and, in part, obtained from others, and from which the several Apprenticeships were afterwards composed. All men do not concern themselves with the education of their characters. Many employ themselves in searching for comfort, hunting after riches, or exploring some other means of happiness. Persons of this description, who were not anxious for proper instruction, we amused with mysteries or delusions, or altogether neglected. We never declared any to be *free* who did not feel and acknowledge the object for which they were born, and possess sufficient experience to pursue their course of life with satisfaction and ease."

"In my case then," observed Wilhelm, "you have been somewhat speedy, for even now I am ignorant of what I can accomplish, or to what I should devote my powers." "We are not to blame for this uncertainty—good fortune may, perhaps, assist us; but, in the meantime, listen: The man in whom much is to be developed, will not too early become acquainted with himself and with the world. Few mortals possess deep reflection and activity combined. Reflection expands, but weakens—activity animates, but circumscribes.

"I beg," said Wilhelm, "that you will not read any more of this mysterious language to me. Such phrases have confused me quite enough already."

"Then I will return to my narrative," continued Jarno, half folding up the parchment, and only now and then look-

ing at it in a cursory manner. "I have been myself of little benefit to the Society or to mankind. I am but an indifferent teacher, for I cannot endure to see a person making unsuccessful attempts, I must call aloud to every one who wanders from his path, even though he were a somnambulist in the act of risking his life. And on this subject I differed frequently with the Abbé, who maintained that errors could only be cured by a course of erring. And we have often argued about you. You were a special favourite with him, and it was no small compliment to have attracted his attention. You will do me the justice to acknowledge that, upon all occasions, I have told you the naked truth." "You have seldom spared me," replied Wilhelm, "and you seem to have been always true to your principles." "Why should we spare," added Jarno, "when a youth of high endowments is following a wrong course?"

"Pardon me," said Wilhelm, "you have already positively denied that I possess any talents for the stage, I confess, however, that though I have wholly abandoned that pursuit, I do not consider myself quite incompetent." "And it has been long my opinion," said Jarno, "that he who can only act himself, is no actor. He who cannot convert himself, both in thought and appearance, into a variety of characters, deserves not the title of actor. For example, you have played the part of Hamlet and several other characters most admirably, because your own disposition, your figure, and the temper of the moment, were adapted to the part. And that was sufficient for an amateur theatre, and for a person who could see no other way open before him. But," said Jarno, as he looked into the parchment, "we should be cautious in the exercise of a talent which we cannot hope to bring to perfection. For no matter how much we may improve, we shall never fail when we thoroughly comprehend the merit of the master, bitterly to deplore the loss of time and strength which have been devoted to such folly."

"Do not read!" cried Wilhelm. "I implore of you not to read. Speak, relate, instruct me. And so it was the Abbé who assisted me in Hamlet, who provided me with the Ghost!"—"Yes! for he declared that it was the only way to cure you, if a cure were possible."—"And therefore he left the veil behind him, and recommended me to fly?"—

"Yes. He hoped that your wishes would be completely satisfied when you had performed the character of Hamlet. He maintained that you would never again tread the boards of a theatre, though I asserted the contrary and my opinion proved correct. We discussed the point that very evening, upon the conclusion of the performance."—"Then you have seen me play?"—"O, certainly!"—"And who performed the Ghost?"—"I do not know precisely, but it was either the Abbé or his twin brother, though I believe it was the latter, as he is a little the taller of the two."—"You seem to have no secrets from each other!"—"Friends may and ought to have secrets from each other, but they should not be secrets to each other."

"The mere remembrance of that perplexity perplexes me. Explain to me the man to whom I owe so much, and of whom, alas! I have such reason to complain."

"We value him highly," observed Jarno, "and submit to his authority, on account of the free and clear penetration, with which he has been enabled by nature to comprehend all the powers which dwell in man and are susceptible of cultivation. Most men, even the most eminent, are limited in their minds, each one prizes certain qualities in himself or others, which alone he is willing to favour and to cultivate. But the Abbé's course is very different; he sympathizes with every mental endowment, and he favours and encourages them all. But I must again examine the roll. 'Mankind is composed of all men, and all powers taken together make up the world. These are often at strife, and seek to destroy each other, but nature preserves and reproduces them. From the merest animal attempts at labour, up to the highest exertion of mental talent; from the faint cries and exclamations of the child, to the most finished periods of the orator and poet; from the first disputes of boys, to the vast preparations by which countries are conquered and possessed; from the smallest favour and the most fleeting affection, to the warmest passion and most earnest pledges of truth; from the simplest feeling of a sensible presence, to the faintest perceptions and hopes of a distant spiritual future—all these things, and far more, lie in the organization of man, and require to be cultivated, not, however, in one individual, but in many. Every gift is important and must be developed. When one person cultivates the beautiful alone, and ano-

ther follows the useful, both together form but a single man. The useful encourages itself, for the crowd produce it, and none can dispense with it; the beautiful needs encouragement, for few can represent it, and it is required by many.' "

"Pause for a moment!" cried Wilhelm, "I have read all that."—"Only a few lines more," continued Jarno; "for here we have the Abbé to perfection. 'One power may control another, but one cannot cultivate another. In every talent lies the force which is to perfect itself, and this is a truth which few of those men understand who teach and influence others.' "—"Neither do I understand it," replied Wilhelm.—"This is one of the Abbé's favourite texts, and let us therefore always thoroughly understand and perceive what is within ourselves, what endowments of our own we would labour to cultivate, but let us be just towards others, as we ourselves deserve only to be valued as far as we can value others."—"O, perplex me no more with these fine sentences! They are a poor remedy for a wounded heart. Rather tell me, with your cruel determination, what you expect from me, and how you mean to sacrifice me."—"I promise you that you will yet be sorry for these suspicions. It is your duty to seek and to prove, and it is ours to assist you. Man cannot be happy until his own unrestrained efforts have marked out his proper limits. But you must not depend upon me, but upon the Abbé. Think not of yourself, but of all that surrounds you. Learn, for example, to comprehend Lothario's superiority; how his comprehension and diligence are inseparably united, how he is always progressing, how he advances himself, and carries others along with him. In all situations, he bears a world with him; his presence ever animates and enkindles. See our good physician on the other hand. He seems to be of the very opposite nature. Whilst Lothario is working upon the general whole, and at a remote distance, the latter surveys with a clear eye the things which are nearest to him. He rather furnishes the means of activity to others, than practises that virtue himself. In his conduct, he resembles a great economist, he works in silence, whilst he provides for all, within their own particular sphere. His talents are employed in perpetually gathering and expending, in re-

ceiving and dispensing in detail. Lothario would perhaps destroy in a day the labours of the Physician for a whole year, but the latter might in one single moment impart to others the power of restoring a hundred-fold what he had destroyed."—"It is a melancholy employment," said Wilhelm, "to contemplate the pure advantages of others, when we are at discord with ourselves. Such reflections may suit the peaceful man, but not one who is agitated by passion and uncertainty."—"Peaceful and wise contemplations," answered Jarno, "are never injurious, and whilst we accustom ourselves to reflect upon the advantages of others, our own qualities insensibly take their place, and every false activity to which our fancy might lead us is then willingly discontinued. If possible, relieve your mind of all suspicion and anxiety! Here comes the Abbé. Let your conduct be friendly towards him, until you know better how deeply you are indebted to him. The rogue! There he goes between Natalia and Theresa. I could lay a wager that he is engaged about some plot. He has a taste for playing the part of Destiny, and often indulges a fancy for contriving marriages."

Wilhelm, whose passionate and angry humours had not been soothed by all the prudent and kind expressions of Jarno, thought it extremely indelicate that his friend should allude to such a topic at that time. He, however, answered with a smile, in which there was some bitterness, "I thought the taste for matchmaking had been left to those who loved each other."

CHAPTER VI.

The company once more assembled together, and our friends were obliged to break off their conversation. Before long a courier was announced, who was commissioned to give a letter into Lothario's hands. The man was introduced: his appearance was bold and confident, and his livery was rich and handsome. Wilhelm thought that in him he recognized the same person whom he had, some time ago, sent to

inquire about Philina and the supposed Mariana, and who had not since made his appearance. He was about to question him, when Lothario, who had perused his letter, asked him, in a serious and somewhat angry tone, "What is the name of your master?"

"That is one of the questions," answered the courier with gravity, "to which I am not instructed to give a reply. I hope the letter will have told you whatever is necessary, as I have no verbal message to deliver."

"Well then," answered Lothario, with a smile, "since your master has such confidence in me as to write in a jocular strain, say that he will be welcome." "He will make no delay," replied the courier, as he retired with a low bow.

"Only think," said Lothario, "of the dull, stupid message. My unknown correspondent writes thus: 'As good humour is the most agreeable of guests when he makes his appearance, and always accompanies me as a travelling companion, I am convinced that the visit which I intend to pay to your Lordship, will not be taken ill, particularly as I hope to be well received by the whole of your illustrious family, and to be allowed to depart with the same feeling. I am always yours, *and so forth*, the Count of Snailfoot.'"

"That must be a new family," said the Abbé.

"An assumed title," added Jarno.

"The mystery is easy to solve," said Natalia. "I will wager a trifle that it is my brother Friedrich, who has projected paying us a visit ever since the death of his uncle."

"You have hit it, my fair and wise sister!" said a voice from the nearest copse, and instantly a handsome, cheerful youth stepped forward. Wilhelm could scarcely restrain an expression of surprise. "What!" he said, "my fair-haired friend to meet me here also!" Friedrich looked at Wilhelm with astonishment, and cried, "In truth, I should have been less astonished to find in the garden of my uncle, the celebrated Pyramids of Egypt, or the tomb of king Mausolus, which I believe no longer exists, than I am to meet you here, my old friend, and unwearied benefactor. A thousand times welcome to me!"

After he had welcomed and kissed every one in turn, he rushed into Wilhelm's arms, and cried, "You must all be kind to this hero, who is also a general and a dramatic

philosopher. I must admit that when I first became acquainted with him, I dressed his hair but indifferently, and yet he afterwards saved me from a torrent of blows. He is as generous as Scipio, and as munificent as Alexander, and though he may be frequently in love, he never hates his rivals. He does not heap coals of fire upon their heads, for that in my opinion is a sorry service, which any one can render, but when his friends have carried off his love, he sends a kind and trusty servant in pursuit, that they may not knock their feet against a stone."

He pursued this strain without ceasing, and no person could prevail upon him to pause, even for an instant; and as they could not reply to him in the same style, he had the conversation wholly to himself. "You must not," he continued, "be surprised at my acquaintance with sacred and profane writers, you shall learn how I have acquired my information." They all wished to know his history, and from what place he had just arrived: but his store of proverbs, and his fund of old stories, prevented him from entering into a connected explanation.

Natalia observed to Theresa, "His cheerfulness makes me sad. I would wager that he is not happy."

As, with the exception of a few jokes from Jarno, Friedrich's merriment was not reechoed by the company, he observed at length, "I have no alternative but to be serious in a serious family. And, as under such solemn circumstances, the burden of my sins weighs heavily upon my soul, I will make a general confession, by which, ladies and gentlemen, you shall not be in the least enlightened. This worthy friend here, who already knows some portion of my life and actions, shall alone be made acquainted with the rest, more particularly as he is the only person who can have any reason to seek such information. Have you not," said he, addressing himself to Wilhelm, "have you not sometimes wished to know the where and the when, the who, the why, and the wherefore? and what progress I have made in the conjugation of the Greek verb φιλεω, φιλῶ, and the derivatives of that very amiable part of speech."

He thereupon took Wilhelm by the arm, and led him away, after he had embraced him with the tenderest affection.

As soon as Friedrich had reached Wilhelm's apartment,

he saw a powder-knife lying upon the table, bearing the inscription "Think of me!" "You take good care of your treasures," he observed,—"why this was Philina's powder-knife,—she gave it to you upon that day when I curled your locks for you,—I hope you have never ceased to think of that affectionate damsel. I cannot assure you that she has not forgotten you: and if I had not long since obliterated every particle of jealousy from my bosom, I could not now behold you without envy."

"Do not speak any more of that creature," answered Wilhelm. "I must confess, that for a long time I could not banish the impression of her agreeable appearance, but that was all."

"For shame!" cried Friedrich, "who can forget his love in this manner? But, indeed, you were as thoroughly in love, as a man could possibly be. No day ever passed over that you did not make her a present; and when a German makes presents, there can be little doubt of his love. Nothing remained for me at last, but to carry her off, and in this, the little red officer at length succeeded."

"What! were you then the officer whom we met at Philina's, and with whom she set out upon her travels?"

"The same, and whom you took for Mariana. We have enjoyed many a laugh at your mistake."

"What cruelty," said Wilhelm, "to leave me in such uncertainty!"

"And to take the courier into our service, whom you sent in search of us!" added Friedrich. "But he is a capital fellow, and we have never let him leave us since. And I love Philina as desperately as ever. She has a sort of power over me, so that I sometimes labour under a mythological delusion, and fancy every day that I shall undergo some strange transformation."

"Tell me," said Wilhelm, "where you have acquired your stock of learning? I observe with astonishment the strange habit which you have acquired of making allusions to old histories and fables."

"I have obtained all my learning," replied Friedrich, "in the most agreeable manner possible. Philina and I live together still, we have rented from a farmer an old castle that was once a knight's inheritance, and there we live as merrily

as fairies. We found there a compendious, but very choice collection of books, amongst which were a Bible in folio, Gottfried's Chronicles, two volumes of the Theatrum Europeum, the Acerra Philologica, the writings of Gryphius, and several other books of less importance. When we were wearied with other amusements, we had recourse to reading, but before long, we became even more weary than before. At length, Philina suggested the rich idea of opening out all our books, upon a large table, when we seated ourselves before them, and read alternately detached passages from whatever works we chose. It afforded us rare amusement! We fancied ourselves in refined society, where it is considered incorrect to dwell too long upon one topic, or to discuss it thoroughly, or else we fancied ourselves in gay society, where one will scarcely allow his neighbour to speak. We amused ourselves in this manner regularly every day, and by this means we became so learned, as to astonish even ourselves. We soon found that there is nothing new under the sun, as our store of learning bore reference to every thing we had seen or heard of. We frequently varied our mode of instruction, by several expedients. Sometimes we read with the assistance of an old hour-glass, which allowed the sand to run down in a few minutes: whereupon we turned it round instantly, and commenced a new book. The sand had scarcely disappeared again, before we started to another subject, and in this way we pursue our studies in a regular academical manner, except that our hours are somewhat shorter, and our studies more varied,"

"I can understand this species of folly," said Wilhelm, "when so merry a pair of mortals meet together, but how so inconstant a couple should have remained so long together, I own is somewhat surprising.

"It is the effect of our good and bad fortune," answered Friedrich. "Philina is afraid to shew herself, she cannot even bear to look upon herself,—she expects shortly to become a mother. Her figure is quite spoiled. A short time ago, she looked at herself in the glass—'Alas! alas!' she exclaimed, and turned her face away. 'Am I not a very Madame Melina! Shocking sight! Do I not look deplorable?'"

"I must confess," said Wilhelm, "that it does seem rather laughable to think of you two as father and mother!"

"It is a foolish business," answered Friedrich, "that I must, at last, be promoted to parental honours. But she asserts it, and the time coincides. I must admit, however, that I had my suspicions, when I thought of that visit which she paid to you, after you had acted the character of Hamlet."

"What visit?" asked Wilhelm.

"Nay! you cannot quite have slept off the recollection of it," answered Friedrich. "The dear, sensitive spirit of that night—if you do not know it already,—was Philina. The story was a hard trial for me, but, if we could be contented with such things, we should not love. Fatherhood, at all events, depends upon conviction, I am convinced, therefore, I am a father. Thus, you see that I can avail myself of my logic at the proper time. And if the child does not die of laughing the instant it is born, it may, perhaps, form a useful or agreeable citizen of the world."

Whilst our friends were talking in this manner of their merry adventures, the other members of the company had engaged in serious conversation. Scarcely had Friedrich and Wilhelm disappeared together, than the Abbé led the rest of his companions unperceived into a garden-house, and as soon as they had taken their seats, he addressed them, thus:

"We have already stated," he said, "in general terms, that Theresa is not the daughter of her reputed mother, it is necessary now that we should explain ourselves more clearly upon this subject. Here is the account in detail, which I propose to lay before you, and to prove in every particular.

"Frau von * * * * lived happily with her husband, during the first years of her marriage, but it happened, unfortunately, that the two children to which she gave birth were still-born. The third infant survived, but the mother was reduced to the point of death, and the physician declared that she could not survive another accouchment. It was necessary, therefore, to come to some decision, and they determined, for pecuniary reasons, not to dissolve the nuptial tie. Frau von * * * * sought, in the cultivation of her mind, in her fondness for display, and in the pursuits of vanity, a recompense for the maternal happiness of which she was thus deprived. She observed, with great satis-

faction, that her husband evinced a partiality for a young lady who superintended his household, a person of engaging appearance, and of sensible character. After a short time she assisted in effecting an arrangement, in pursuance of which the young maiden submitted to the wishes of Theresa's father, who continued to fulfil her household duties, with more attachment and devotion to her mistress, even than she had exhibited before.

"In due course of time an infant was born, and upon this occasion the same idea occurred to the married people, though they were actuated by quite different motives. Herr von * * * * wished that the child of his mistress should be considered as his lawful offspring, and Frau von * * * * vexed that through the indiscretion of her physician, her own infirmity had been published in the neighbourhood, thought to counteract it, by means of a supposititious child, and hoped by this apparent compliance with her husband's wishes, to preserve an influence at home, which she was otherwise in danger of losing. She was of a more reserved disposition than her husband, but she saw his purpose, and she contrived, without inquiring, to ascertain his wishes. She made her own terms, obtaining everything that she desired, and hence arose the will, to which we have alluded, in which the child was so indifferently provided for. The old physician was at this time dead. They applied, therefore, to a young man of discretion, by whom he was succeeded, and who, having been handsomely remunerated, thought he saw an opportunity for establishing his own credit by remedying the unskilfulness and premature opinion of his departed colleague. The true mother became a party to the deception, which was successfully managed. Theresa was born, and immediately handed over to the care of a step-mother, whilst her real parent fell a victim to this plot, as she died, in consequence of having ventured out too early, and left the father inconsolable.

"But Frau von * * * * had completely succeeded in her design. In the eyes of the world she was the mother of a darling child, which she exhibited with much ostentation, and she felt happy at finding herself delivered from a rival, whose influence she beheld with jealous eyes, and whose future power over her husband she had some reason to apprehend. Her kindness to the infant was indescribable, and in confi-

dent moments she displayed so lively a sympathy for her husband's loss, that he placed in her hands, not only his own happiness, but that of his wife and child, and it was only a short time before his death, through the interference of his elder daughter, that he once more became master of his household. Such was the secret, lovely Theresa, which your father, in his last illness, was anxious to impart to you, and this is the history which I have wished circumstantially to relate to you, at a moment, when, by a strange coincidence, your intended husband happens to be absent. Here are the papers which will clearly prove all that I have stated. You will perceive, by perusing them, how long I have been on the point of making this discovery, and how I have only lately become acquainted with all the facts. I did not dare to impart to my friend the possibility of his happiness, as it would have been too distressing, if his hopes should be a second time frustrated. You may understand Lydia's suspicions, but I confess that I never encouraged our friend's attachment to her, from the moment when I expected his union with Theresa."

No one offered a remark upon the termination of this statement. After some days the ladies returned the papers, and made no further allusion to the subject.

They soon found abundant means to provide occupation for the party whilst they remained together : and the country around them was so charming, that our friends took the greatest pleasure in visiting it, either singly or in parties, on horseback, in carriages, or as pedestrians. Jarno took advantage of one of these excursions to open the affair to Wilhelm, and laid all the papers before him, without seeming to require that he should express any decision upon the subject.

" In the strange situation in which I find myself placed," said Wilhelm, " it is only necessary that I should repeat to you, what I have already, in the presence of Natalia, promised with a conscientious heart. Lothario and his friend may demand from me every species of self denial. I abandon all my pretensions to Theresa, only furnish me with a proper formal discharge. It requires no long reflection to decide me. I have long felt that Theresa is forced to make an effort to retain even an appearance of the affection with

which she used to welcome me. Her love is gone from me, or rather I have never possessed it."

"It will be easier," replied Jarno, "to comprehend such matters as these, gradually, in silence and by patience, than to explain them by conversations which never fail to occasion perplexity and embarrassment."

"I should rather have thought," answered Wilhelm, "that this matter admits of the clearest and calmest decision. I have often been rebuked for hesitation and uncertainty, but why will you now, when I am resolved, commit towards me the very fault of which I am accused? Why will the world take so much trouble in training us, in order that we may the clearer observe their own deficiencies? Let me enjoy the delightful thought that I have escaped a mistaken alliance, into which I should have entered with the purest feelings in the world."

In spite of this request, some delays elapsed, and he heard no more of the affair, nor did he perceive the smallest alteration in the conduct of his friends. Their conversation was always of the most general and indifferent nature.

CHAPTER VII.

One day Natalia, Jarno, and Wilhelm were sitting together, when the former observed, "You are thoughtful, Jarno. I have remarked it for some time."

"It is true," replied the latter, "I see the end of some important business before me, with which I have been for a long time engaged, and which I am now obliged to bring to a conclusion. You are already acquainted with it in some measure, and I do not object to speak of it before our friend, and he must himself decide whether he will engage in it or not. You will soon see me no more, as I have an intention of making a voyage to America."

"To America?" said Wilhelm with a smile, "I should not have expected such an adventure from you, still less that you would have chosen me for a companion."

"When you have heard me explain our plan," said Jarno, "you will give it a better name, and, perhaps, be induced to join in it. Listen to me. It does not need a very deep knowledge of the world, to perceive that important changes are about to occur, and that property is no where quite secure."

"I have no great experience in worldly matters," observed Wilhelm, "and I have not lately troubled myself much about my own affairs. Perhaps it would have been better for me if I had banished them from my mind still longer, for I must say that an anxiety about such things renders me melancholy."

"Hear me out," said Jarno. "Anxiety becomes a person in mature age, in order that youth may live for a longer time free from care. Unfortunately an equality in human affairs can only be maintained by contrarieties. At present nothing seems less advisable than to keep your property in only one place, to trust your money to a single spot, and it is difficult to manage it well when dispersed. We have, therefore, thought of a plan. A society is about to be established by the inhabitants of our old tower, which is to extend to all parts of the world, and of which every living being may become a member. We are to insure a competent subsistence to each other, in the single event of a revolution happening, which shall drive any of the members from his possessions. I propose to visit America, to avail myself of the good connections which our friend formed during his residence there. The Abbé intends to go to Russia, and if you join us, you shall choose whether you will accompany me, or remain in Germany to assist Lothario. I suppose you will prefer the former, for a distant journey cannot fail to be profitable to a young man."

Wilhelm replied after a moment's reflection. "The proposal is worth considering, for before long I shall doubtless think that the further I am away from this place the better. I trust you will acquaint me more fully with your plan. It arises, perhaps, from my ignorance of the world, but I cannot help thinking that your proposal is attended with insuperable difficulties."

"And these," continued Jarno, "have been for the most part overcome, by the fact that the Society has hitherto con-

sisted of a few honourable, discreet and determined persons, possessing an united feeling, by which alone societies can hope to prosper."

Friedrich, who had hitherto been a mere listener, immediately replied, "if you give me proper encouragement, perhaps I may be tempted to join you."

Jarno shook his head.

"Well, what objections have you to offer?" continued Friedrich. "In a new colony young people will be required, and I can provide them for you, and merry colonists they will prove I promise you. And in addition, I know a good kind maiden, who does not find herself quite at home here—I mean the sweet, charming Lydia. What is she to do with all her grief and sorrow, unless she can drown it in the depths of the sea, and find some honest fellow to take her by the hand. I should have thought that you, my kind friends, who have always taken so much interest in consoling the distressed, would each have taken his girl under his arm and accompanied Jarno."

This proposal displeased Wilhelm. He answered, however, with apparent composure. "I am not certain that she is disengaged, and as I have always been especially unfortunate, in courtship, I should scarcely like to make the attempt."

Natalia, turning to her brother, observed, "Friedrich, though you are accustomed to act with so much levity, your sentiments may not prove quite agreeable to others. Our friend deserves a heart that shall be all his own, uninfluenced by foreign recollections, and it is only with a pure and reasonable being, like Theresa, that he could venture upon such a risk."

"Risk!" exclaimed Friedrich. "In love it is all risk. In the bower, or at the altar, in an embrace, or bound by a golden ring, by the chirping of a cricket or at the sound of trumpets and drums, it is all risk: chance does it all."

"I have always observed," said Natalia, "that our principles are a mere supplement to our mode of existence. We delight to clothe our errors in the garb of appropriate laws. Observe the path by which your mistress will lead you, now that she has attracted you to her, and obtained such an influence over your mind."

"She is in a very pretty path herself at present," said

Friedrich, "she is on the road to sanctity. It is rather a by-way, to be sure, but it is all the pleasanter and safer on that account. Many a sinner has already travelled that road. But, my dear sister, as this is all a question of love, why should you not take a part in it? In my opinion you will never marry, till a wife is wanted somewhere, and then you will give yourself away, with your accustomed generosity, to form the supplement to some peculiar mode of existence. Let us, therefore, make a bargain with Jarno, and select our travelling companions."

"Your proposals come too late," observed Jarno, "Lydia is already provided for."

"How is that managed?" asked Friedrich.

"I have myself offered her my hand," said Jarno.

"Old gentleman," said Friedrich, "you have in that case accomplished a feat, to which if we regard it as a substantive, several adjectives might be appended, and for which, if we look upon it as a subject, various predicates might be found."

"I must confess candidly, that it is a dangerous step to marry a maiden at the very moment when her love for another person is driving her to despair."

"A step, however, which I have ventured to take," said Jarno, "and subject to certain conditions, she is mine. Depend upon it, the world contains no more valuable treasure than a heart susceptible of love and passion. Whether that heart has ever loved—whether it loves at present, are questions of small importance. The warmth with which another is loved is almost more charming to me than that with which I should be loved myself. I see the strength, the power of an affectionate heart, and my own self-love does not disturb the pure vision."

"Have you spoken to Lydia lately?" asked Natalia.

Jarno nodded with a smile. Natalia shook her head as she rose from her seat, and said, "I do not well know what to make of you, but at all events you shall not deceive me."

He was about to retire, when the Abbé made his appearance with a letter in his hand, and said to her, "Remain for a moment. I have a proposal to make, with respect to which I shall be glad of your advice. The Marquis, our deceased uncle's friend, whom we have so long expected,

will be here in a few days. He has written to say that his knowledge of the German language is not so perfect as he believed, he requires a companion, who shall be master of that and of other languages; and as he wishes rather for literary than for political society, such an interpreter seems indispensable to him. I know no person more adapted for his purpose than our young friend here. He is conversant with the language, and possesses a fund of general information, and it will be a great advantage for him to travel through Germany in such excellent company, and in the enjoyment of so many advantages. He who has not visited his native land has no standard by which he can judge of other countries. What is your opinion, my friend? and what is yours, Natalia?"

No one knew what objection to offer to the proposal. Jarno seemed to think, that his project of making a voyage to America, would not prove any obstacle, as he had no intention of setting out immediately. Natalia and Friedrich quoted many proverbs about the advantage of travelling.

Wilhelm could scarcely conceal his anger at this new proposition. He saw plainly that a plan had been concerted for getting rid of him, and the worst feature in the whole case was, that it was done too openly and without any regard to his feelings. The suspicions which Lydia had awakened in his bosom, and every thing of which he had personal experience, now vividly occurred to him, and even the natural manner in which Jarno had unfolded his project, seemed to him nothing better than a cunning artifice.

He reflected for a moment, and answered, "This proposal will at all events require mature deliberation."

"Perhaps a prompt decision may be necessary," replied the Abbé.

"I am not quite prepared for that," observed Wilhelm. "But at all events we may await the arrival of the Marquis, and then see whether we shall suit each other. One condition however I must require, that I shall be at liberty to take Felix with me, and that he shall accompany me everywhere."

"Such a condition will scarcely be acceded to," replied the Abbé.

"And I do not understand," cried Wilhelm, "why I

should allow any person to prescribe conditions to me, or why I should seek to be the companion of an Italian, if I wish to visit my native land."

"Because a young man," replied the Abbé, with a certain look of earnestness, "always requires to form connections."

Wilhelm, who perceived that he would not be able to preserve his self-command much longer, as his anger had only been calmed by Natalia's presence, replied rather hastily, "Only grant me a little more time for reflection, and I dare say it will soon appear whether I require to form connections, or whether, on the contrary, I am not impelled by heart and head to burst the many bonds which threaten to keep me in endless and wretched thraldom."

Thus he spoke with a deeply excited mind. But one glance at Natalia restored his composure, for in that passionate moment her beauty and her worth impressed themselves more strongly upon his mind than ever.

"Yes," he said, when he found himself once more alone, "confess that you love her, and that you feel now what it is for a man to love with all his soul. It was thus that I once loved Mariana, and so wholly lost myself. I loved Philina, though I could not help despising her. Aurelia I respected, but could never love. I reverenced Theresa, and my fatherly affection for her assumed the form of passion, and now when all the feelings which can render a mortal happy meet within my heart, I am compelled to fly! Alas! why must an unconquerable wish to possess her be inseparable from these feelings and emotions? and why, without such a possession, should all other happiness be absolutely destroyed? Can I ever enjoy the sun, the world, or any other happiness? Shall I not for ever say, 'Natalia is not there!' and yet Natalia will never be absent from me. If I shut my eyes, I shall behold her form, and when I open them, she will be seen in every thing, like that appearance which a dazzling object leaves behind. Was not my mind once filled with the swiftly passing figure of the Amazon? And when I saw her she was a stranger to me. And now when I know her, when I have been so long near to her, and she has so completely won my sympathy, her qualities are as deeply impressed upon my heart, as her image formerly was upon my fancy. It is painful to be for ever seeking, but still

more painful when we have found, to be compelled to leave. What shall I now seek further in the world? What town, what country contains a treasure equal to this, and shall I for ever travel in order to find something that is inferior? Is life then nothing but a race-course, where we are compelled to turn as soon as we have reached the farthest end? And is the good, the excellent, nothing but an immoveable goal, from which we are driven back as soon as we seem to have attained it? Those who seek mere earthly treasures, may find them in their proper climates, or may buy them at the fair!

"Come, my dearest boy!" he exclaimed to Felix, who came running to him at that moment, "come, and be every thing to me! You were given to me to supply the loss of your beloved mother, you must now replace the second mother, whom I had intended for you, and you have a greater deficiency to supply. Let my heart and soul be filled with your beauty, your loveliness, your talents, and your capabilities."

The child was playing with a new toy. The father tried to improve it for him, but at that very instant Felix lost his whole interest in it. "Ah!" cried Wilhelm, "you are a genuine child of earth! come then, my son, my brother, let us henceforth wander together through the world, without an object, as best we may."

His determination to depart, to take his child along with him, and to search for amusement in the world, was now firmly adopted. He accordingly wrote to Werner for a supply of money and for some letters of credit, and sent off Friedrich's courier, with the strictest orders to return as soon as possible. Although he was highly incensed against his other friends, his affection for Natalia continued undiminished. He confided to her his intention; she took it for granted that he would put it in execution, and although her apparent indifference grieved him more than a little, yet the kindness of her manner and her presence rendered him calm. She advised him to visit several cities, where he might become acquainted with her friends. The courier soon returned, and brought the letters which Wilhelm had required, and Werner expressed his dissatisfaction at this sudden whim. "I must defer my hopes," he wrote, "of

your returning prudence. But whither are you all departing? and what is become of the lady whose assistance I have been expecting about the arrangement of your affairs? And your other friends have disappeared. The entire business is thrown upon your lawyer and myself. It is fortunate that he is as good a jurist as I am a financier, and that we are both men of business. Farewell! We must forgive your errors, as otherwise our situation in this neighbourhood would not have been so favourable."

So far as related to his outward circumstances, Wilhelm might be considered to have taken his departure, but there were two circumstances which gave him some uneasiness. They would not on any account allow him to visit Mignon's remains until the funeral, which the Abbé intended to celebrate, and the preparations for that ceremony were not yet complete. Moreover, the physician had been called away by a singular letter which he had received from the country clergyman. It was in reference to the Harper, of whose fate Wilhelm was anxious to procure some farther information.

In this state of perplexity he could rest neither by day nor by night. His mind and body were alike disturbed. When all others were asleep, he roamed restlessly through the house. The presence of the well-known works of art attracted and repelled him. He could neither retain nor abandon the objects by which he was surrounded, every thing awakened his recollections of the past, he surveyed the whole circle of his existence which lay in fragments before him, and seemed as if they could never be united. These works of art which his father had sold, seemed as an omen that he would never acquire a peaceable and firm possession of anything valuable in life, but that he was doomed to be deprived of his acquisitions either by his own fault or that of others. He became so completely lost in these strange and melancholy contemplations, that he seemed to himself like a spirit, and even when he felt and handled material objects, he could scarcely bring himself to believe that he really lived and moved.

Nothing but the intense grief which he felt at being compelled by frivolous but irresistible causes, to leave the object which he had found, after so much deep anxiety, and

the tears which he was compelled to shed, restored him to the consciousness of his existence. In vain did he call to mind how happy he was in other respects. "All is nothing now," he said, "when the one thing fails which possesses any real value!"

The Abbé announced to the company the arrival of the Marquis. "It seems," he said, addressing himself to Wilhelm, "that you are resolved to leave us, accompanied by your child. I could wish, however, that you had first become acquainted with this nobleman, who may prove of the greatest advantage to you, if you should meet him upon your travels." The Marquis entered. He was a person not far advanced in years, with a handsome, pleasing, Lombard figure. When a youth, he had become known to Lothario's uncle, who was in the army, and they had subsequently met in the transaction of public business. They had travelled through the greater part of Italy together, and the various objects of art by which the Marquis was now surrounded, had been purchased or procured in his presence, under various happy circumstances, which he still remembered.

The Italians possess a much higher idea of the dignity of art than any other nation. Every individual of that country, when he would engage in any employment, adopts the title of artist, master, or professor, thus admitting that he does not consider it sufficient to claim a secondary excellency, or to acquire a mere practical dexterity, and maintaining that every artist should acquire the habit of endeavouring to establish sound principles, and understand his reasons for adopting his own particular course.

The stranger was moved at beholding these productions now that their owner was no more, and he felt delighted to perceive that the spirit of his friend survived in the persons by whom he was surrounded. They examined the several works, and found a great satisfaction in being able so well to understand each other. The Marquis and the Abbé conversed together. Natalia, who felt herself once more in the presence of her uncle, entered fully into their opinions and criticisms, which Wilhelm however was obliged to translate into dramatic language in order to understand. It was found necessary upon these occasions to check the frivolity of Friedrich. Jarno was seldom present.

When it was observed, that in these times, superior works of art were very seldom produced, the Marquis said, "It is not easy to explain how much the artist must owe to circumstances, and how endless are the demands which the greatest genius and the most commanding talent must exact from themselves; in addition to this, the diligence which is required for the cultivation of art, is unspeakable. If therefore the artist is not highly favoured by circumstances, if he observes that the world can be very easily satisfied, and requires nothing more than a light, pleasing, transitory show, it would be surprising if indolence and self-love did not impede his progress, and induce him to exchange works of fashion for gold and praise, rather than follow the correct path, which would only lead him to a painful martyrdom. Hence the artists of the present age constantly raise expectations which they never realize. They seek to charm, but they never satisfy, every thing is merely indicated, and nowhere do we find foundation or perfection. It is only necessary to linger for a short time in a gallery and observe what works of art attract the crowd, what things are praised and what are censured, to prove how little cause we have to be satisfied with the present, or to hope for the future."

"Yes," replied the Abbé, "and in this manner, artists and critics mutually educate each other. The latter seek nothing more than a general vague enjoyment; a work of art, in their eyes, resembles a work of nature, and men believe, for the most part, that the organs by which such objects can be enjoyed, resemble the tongue and the palate, and need no cultivation, and they criticize a work of art as they would an article of food. They do not comprehend the different species of cultivation which is necessary to elevate them to a true enjoyment of art, the most difficult part of which consists, perhaps, in that sort of separation which a man who would become perfect must accomplish in himself, and for this reason there are so many persons imperfectly cultivated, who think themselves nevertheless fully competent to pronounce an opinion upon the general whole."

"I have not quite understood your meaning," said Jarno, who entered at that moment.

"It is not easy," replied the Abbe, "to explain one's meaning fully in so short a time. But I may observe this much: whenever an individual lays claim to manifold activity or manifold enjoyments, he should possess the power of rendering his manifold organs independent of each other. He who will accomplish or enjoy every thing in his full nature, he who will connect everything without himself in such a species of enjoyment, must waste his time in perpetual unsuccessful efforts. How easy it appears, and yet it is extremely difficult, to admire a noble disposition, or a beautiful painting, in and for itself alone, to hear sweet music for the music's sake, to applaud the actor in the actor, and to feel pleasure in the sight of a building, on account of its harmony and durability. For the most part men deal with finished works of art as if they were soft clay. According to their fancies, notions and caprices, the polished marble must be again re-modelled, the firm-built edifice contracted or expanded, a picture must teach, a play instruct, and every thing accomplish all. But this arises from the circumstance that most men are unformed, that they cannot give themselves or their beings any proper shape, and therefore they would deprive other objects of their form, that every thing may be as loose and uncompact as they are. In fine they reduce every thing to what they call effect, maintaining that everything is relative, which in truth will be the case eventually, with the exception, perhaps, of their own folly and want of taste, which are likely to remain as positive as possible."

"I understand you," said Jarno, "or rather I perceive that your observations completely resemble the principles to which you have always attached so much importance. But I cannot deal so severely with mankind. I know many, who in the presence of the great works of art and nature, remember their own poor insufficiency, whose morality and conscience accompany them to the opera, who do not forget their loves and hatred when they behold a colonnade. They diminish the effect of the best and greatest things which can be presented to them, that they may in some measure become capable of union with their own wretched nature."

CHAPTER VIII.

In the evening, the Abbé invited them to the funeral of Mignon. The company assembled in the Hall of the Past, and found it illuminated and decorated in the most magnificent manner. The walls were completely covered with azure tapestry, so that the friezes and cornices alone were visible. Four large wax lights were burning in the four candelabra which stood in the corners, and four smaller ones were placed near the sarcophagus, in the middle of the apartment. Near the latter, stood four boys attired in azure and silver, holding in their hands broad fans of ostrich feathers, which they waved above a figure that rested upon the sarcophagus. The company took their seats, and two invisible choruses commenced in a low, soft recitative, to ask: "Whom do you bring to our silent company?" The four children responded with sweet voices: "A weary companion we bring to you, let her rest among you, till the song of her heavenly sisters shall again awaken her."

Chorus.

Thou first of youth within our circle, we welcome thee! We welcome thee with sadness. Let no youth, no maiden follow thee! Let age alone, consenting and composed, approach the silent hall, and may this dear, dear child, repose in the solemn company.

Boys.

Alas! how unwillingly we have brought thee hither!

Alas! thou shalt remain here! Let us also remain, let us weep, let us weep over thy bier!

Chorus.

Behold the powerful wings! behold the pure white robe! How shines the golden band upon her head! See how beautiful is her dignified repose!

Boys.

Alas! her wings raise her not! in the light pastime her robe

flutters no more. When we crowned her head with roses, she looked upon us with kind and friendly eyes.

Chorus.

Look forward with the eyes of the spirit! Let imagination awake, which bears Life—the fairest and the highest—to a habitation beyond the stars!

Boys.

But alas! we shall seek her here in vain! In the garden she wanders no more, nor culls the flowers of the meadow. Let us weep: we leave her here. Let us weep and remain with her!

Chorus.

Children, return to life. Let the pure air which plays above the rushing water, dry your tears? Fly the night! Day and happiness and continuance are the lot of the living.

Boys.

Rise, we return again to life. Let the day yield us labour and pleasure, till the evening brings us repose, and nightly sleep refreshes us.

Chorus.

Children! Hasten into life! In the pure robe of beauty, may Love meet you with heavenly countenance and the garland of immortality!

The children were already at a distance, the Abbé rose from his seat and retired behind the bier. "It was the wish," he said, "of the man who prepared this silent abode, that each new tenant should be welcomed with solemnity. After him, the builder of this dwelling, the founder of this establishment, we have brought hither a young stranger, and thus this small space has already received two very different victims of the stern, arbitrary and inexorable Goddess of Death. We enter into life in conformity with appointed laws. Our days are numbered which are to ripen us for the enjoyment of the Light, but for the duration of life there is no law. The weakest thread of life will extend to an

unexpected length, and the strongest is suddenly cut by the scissors of Fate, who seems to take delight in contradictions. Of the child whom we inter here, we have but little to say. It is a mystery to us, whence she came, her parents we know not, and we can only guess at the number of her years. Her deep and inpenetrable heart scarcely allowed us to conjecture its emotions, and nothing therein was plain and evident, save her affection for the man, who had rescued her from the hands of a barbarian. This tender attachment, this lively gratitude, seemed to be the flame which consumed the oil of her life. The skill of the physician could not prolong her fair existence, the most anxious friendship could not detain her departing spirit, it employed its whole resources to preserve her body and snatch it from decay. A preserving balsam has been infused into her veins, and has coloured her too early faded cheeks with the rosy hue of life. Come near, my friends, and behold this miracle of art and affection!"

He raised the veil: the child was reposing in the most graceful posture, and lay in its angel attire, as if asleep.—They all drew near, and admired the wonderful appearance of life. Wilhelm alone retained his seat, he could not overcome his feelings. He dared not think upon what he felt; and every thought filled him with anguish.

The address had been delivered in the French language, on account of the Marquis. The latter advanced with the others, and surveyed the body with attention. The Abbé continued. "This affectionate heart, which has always been so closed against mankind, has ever turned towards God with a holy confidence. Humility, and even a love of self-abasement, seemed to be her natural disposition. She was zealously attached to the Catholic religion, in which she had been born and educated. She frequently expressed her wish to be interred in holy ground, and in conformity with the customs of the Church; we have consecrated this marble-coffin, and the little earth which is contained within the pillow, on which her head reposes. With what ardour did she, in the last moments, kiss the image of the Crucified, which is beautifully figured on her tender arm, with many hundred punctures!" Whilst he said this, he uncovered her right arm, and a Crucifix, ornamented with a multitude of

letters and signs, appeared in blue colours upon her fair white skin.

The Marquis looked at it with eager astonishment. "O God! my poor child!" he exclaimed as he rose, and extended his hands towards heaven. "Poor child! unhappy niece! Do I find thee once more? What painful joy do I experience to see thee again, after our long despair, to recover thy dear body, which we believed had become a prey to the monsters of the deep—to find thee again, dead it is true, but undecayed. I attend thy funeral obsequies which are so nobly celebrated, and are made splendid by the persons who accompany them to thy last resting-place.—And when I am able to express my thanks," he said with faltering voice, "I will evince my gratitude to you."

His tears prevented him from speaking further. The Abbé pressed a spring, whereupon the body sank slowly into the marble coffin.

Four youths dressed in the same manner as the boys had been, now advanced from behind the tapestry, and having placed the heavy, but beautiful ornamented cover upon the coffin, they commenced the following hymn—

The Youths.

Securely is the treasure now preserved—the beautiful image of the Past! Here in the marble it rests free from decay, and it lives also in your hearts with active life. Go back, go back into life; and take holy Earnestness along with you, for holy Earnestness alone makes life eternity.

The invisible Chorus took part in the last strophe, but none of the company heard the consoling words: each was too busy with his own emotions, and with the late wonderful discovery. The Abbé and Natalia led the Marquis forth, whilst Theresa and Lothario conducted Wilhelm from the scene; and before the echoes of the hymn had completely died away, the pain, the reflections, the thoughts and curiosity which they had experienced, returned in full force, and held complete possession of their minds.

CHAPTER IX.

The Marquis avoided all allusion to the subject, but he held long and secret communications with the Abbé. He sought consolation in music, when the company were assembled together, and they willingly acceded to his wishes as they were glad to escape the pain of entering into conversation with him. He lived thus for some time, till they observed that he was making preparations for a journey. He said one day to Wilhelm, "I shall not disturb the remains of the dear child, let her rest in the place where she has loved and suffered; but her friends must promise to visit me in her own country, in the spot where the poor creature was born and educated: they must see the pillars and statues, of which she so long retained a dear remembrance.

"I will take them to the little bays, where she loved to gather pebbles. You must not withdraw yourself, my dear young friend, from the gratitude of a family that is so deeply indebted to you. To-morrow I shall take my departure. I have confided her whole history to the Abbé, he will repeat it to you. He could pardon me, when grief interrupted my narrative, and as a stranger, he will be able to give more connection to the events which I detailed. If, as the Abbé proposed, you will consent to accompany me upon my tour through Germany, you shall be cordially welcome. You need not leave your child behind, any trifling inconvenience which he may occasion, will forcibly recall the protection which my poor niece received from you."

The same evening they were surprised by the arrival of the Countess. Upon her entrance, Wilhelm trembled in every limb: she herself remained near to her sister, who handed her a chair. How simple was her dress, and how altered was her form! Wilhelm scarcely ventured to look at her, she saluted him in a friendly manner, but the general nature of her expressions could not conceal her sentiments and feelings. The Marquis had retired at an early hour, and the company felt no inclination to separate. The Abbé now produced a manuscript, observing—"I have written down the singular history which has been confided to me. We should not spare pen and ink, when we find it useful to make special

memorandums of remarkable events. The Countess, having been informed of the particular subject of the narrative, the Abbé commenced.

"With all my experience of the world, I have always considered, that my father was one of the most extraordinary of men. His character was noble and upright, his ideas enlarged, I may even say great, he was severe towards himself. In all his projects he pursued a strict order, and in all his plans an interrupted perseverance. In one point of view he was a person, with whom it was easy to transact business; yet, in consequence of his peculiar qualities, he was not happy in the world, as he required that the state, as well as his neighbours, children and dependants, should strictly observe the rules which he had imposed upon himself. The moderation of his demands became exorbitant from their rigour, and he was a stranger to enjoyment, because nothing ever succeeded according to his precise plan. At the moment when he was building a palace, laying out a garden, or purchasing a large and beautiful estate, I have seen him a prey to the conviction, that fate had condemned him to incessant privations and sufferings. His outward deportment was remarkable for its dignity, and even, when he jested, he evinced the greatness of his understanding. He could endure censure, and I never knew him to be irritated, except upon one occasion, when he learnt that one of his undertakings had been spoken of as ridiculous. In this same spirit he proposed to settle his children and his fortune. My elder brother had been educated as a person who expected a rich inheritance. I was intended for the Church, and the youngest of our family was to be a soldier. I was lively in disposition, ardent, active, quick, and skilled in all bodily exercises. My youngest brother seemed more disposed to lead a life of luxurious quiet, and was devoted to study, to the arts of music and poetry. It was only after the hardest struggles, and the fullest conviction of the impossibility of his project, that my father reluctantly consented that we should exchange our vocations, and though we were both content, he was dissatisfied, and maintained that no good could result from our arrangement. The older he grew, the more did he become detached from society. At last he lived almost wholly alone. His only companions were an old friend, who

had served in the German army, and had lost his wife during one of his campaigns, and a little daughter of the latter, about ten years of age. This person had purchased a property in our neighbourhood, and he was accustomed to visit my father every week, on particular days, and at particular hours, on which occasions he was generally accompanied by his child. He never contradicted my father, who at length became quite attached to him, and esteemed him as his only endurable companion. After my parent's decease, we found that the old gentleman had not paid his visits for nothing, and that he was well provided for by my father's will. He enlarged his estates, and laid aside a handsome provision for his daughter. The girl grew up well, she was extremely beautiful, and my eldest brother frequently suggested in joke that I ought to marry her.

"In the mean time, our brother Augustine had spent his years in a convent, in the strangest state of mind. He abandoned himself wholly to religious enthusiasm, to certain emotions half spiritual, and half physical, which, for a time, exalted him to the third heaven, and then cast him into an abyss of dejection and misery. During my father's life-time, we could have effected no change in his condition, as what could we have desired or proposed? But after my father's death, he visited us frequently, and his state, which at first distressed us, at length became more tolerable, for his good sense had obtained the victory. But, in proportion as his recovery rendered him content, the more strongly did he urge us to procure for him a release from his vows, and he gave us to understand, that his thoughts were turned upon our neighbour Sperata.

"My elder brother had suffered too much from the severity of our father, to remain unmoved at the condition of Augustine. We spoke to our family confessor, a worthy old man, and we mentioned to him the double purpose of our brother, and implored him to take an interest in his case. He hesitated, contrary to his usual custom, and when, at length, Augustine became urgent, and we pressed the clergyman more closely, he was compelled to inform us of the strange mystery.

"Sperata was our sister, the child of our father and mother. The latter had become pregnant when she was

advanced in years, and as a similar circumstance had, some short time before, occasioned much jesting in the neighbourhood, my father, to escape derision, had determined to hide this somewhat late but lawful fruit of love, with as much care as that with which the accidental fruits of an early affection are concealed. Our mother was therefore confined in secret, the child was taken to the country, and the old friend of our family whom we have mentioned, and who, with the exception of the confessor, was the only person acquainted with the circumstance, was easily persuaded to receive the infant as his daughter. The confessor was authorized, in case of extremity, to divulge the secret. The reputed father having died, Sperata was brought up under the superintendence of an old lady; we were aware that our brother had been attracted to her residence, by his love of music, and when he once more insisted that we should procure his release from his religious vows, it became necessary that we should inform him without delay of the dangerous precipice upon which he stood.

"He looked at us with a wild, contemptuous glance. 'Keep your idle tales for children and credulous fools!' he cried, 'you shall never tear Sperata from my heart, she is mine. Deny your frightful story, which can only render me vainly but irrecoverably wretched. Sperata is not my sister, she is my wife! He told us how the heavenly maiden had led him to the enjoyment of true existence from a state of unnatural separation from mankind, how their spirits accorded like their voices, how he had blessed all his sufferings and woes, as they had preserved him for this dearest of creatures. We were shocked at the discovery, his situation distressed us, and we knew not what to do, when he assured us that Sperata was in a condition soon to become a mother. Our confessor did every thing which his duty commanded, but that afforded us no relief. The commands of nature and religion, moral rights and civil laws were all violently assailed by my brother. Nothing appeared to him sacred, except his relation to Sperata, nothing honourable, but the title of husband and father. 'These alone,' he cried, 'are in strict accordance with nature, all other things are fancy and opinion. Are there not noble nations who permitted marriage with a sister?

Do not speak of your gods; you never use their names, but to deceive us, to lead us from the paths of nature, and by shameful compulsion, to convert the most honourable impulses into crimes. Madness and vice are the fate of those who became the victims of your abominable system.

"'I may speak, for few persons have suffered like me; I have known all feelings, from the highest and sweetest enthusiasm, to the most frightful weakness, annihilation and despair, from the loftiest aspirations of unearthly being, to the most complete disbelief in myself. I have drunk these dreadful dregs from the bottom of the attractive cup, and my whole being has been poisoned to its inmost core. But now when I am restored to my senses by the power of love, that most precious gift of nature, when reposing in the arms of a heavenly maiden, I become conscious of my own existence, and of her's, and know that from this loving union, another being will arise to smile upon us—then you open upon me your flames of hell, your purgatory, which can only bewilder a vain imagination, and you oppose them to the vivid, real and undestructible enjoyment of the purest love. Meet us under yonder cypresses, whose solemn summits aspire to heaven, meet us in the gardens where the citrons and pomegranates bloom beside us, where the sweet myrtles enchant us with their delicious flowers, and then dare to perplex us with the harmless but wretched contrivances which the fancies of mankind have spun.'

"For a long time he continued in obstinate disbelief of our story, and at length when we assured him of its truth, which was confirmed by the statement of the confessor, he did not become convinced, but exclaimed, 'Consult not the echoes of your cloisters, consult not your antiquated parchments and your contracted rules and ordinances! Consult your own hearts and nature: she will tell you from what you should recoil, she will shew by the plainest evidence the things upon which she has pronounced her enduring and irrevocable curse. Behold the lilies! Do not husband and wife spring from one stem? Does not the flower which bore them, contain them both, and is not the lily the type of innocence, and is not their sisterly union fruitful? Nature declares the things which she abhors. The creature which should not be, can never be produced. The creature which

lives falsely, is soon destroyed. Unfruitfulness, a wretched existence, premature decay, these are her curses, the evidences of her anger. She punishes by immediate effects. Look around you, and you cannot fail to see what is forbidden, what is cursed. In the silence of the cloisters, in the bustle of the world, a thousand practices are consecrated and revered, upon which her curse has been pronounced. She looks with eyes of displeasure upon inert idleness, no less than upon overstrained toil, upon caprice and extravagance as well as upon destitution and constraint. Her maxim is moderation; all her commands are true, and all her influences peaceful. He who has suffered, as I have done, has the privilege of being free. Sperata is mine, and death alone shall deprive me of her. How can I retain her? How can I be happy? What is your solicitude? I shall go to her this instant, and part from her no more.'

"He was hastening to the boat, that he might cross over to her, but we detained him, begging that he would not take a step which might produce such fearful consequences. He should remember that he was not living in the free world of his own thoughts and ideas, but in a state where laws and regulations were as unchangeable as the principles of nature. We promised our confessor that we would not lose sight of our brother, nor allow him to leave the castle. Upon this, he took his leave, assuring us that he would return again in a few days. Our suspicions were soon realized. My brother's understanding had made him strong, but his heart was weak. The early impressions of religion returned in full force, and dreadful doubts accompanied them. He spent two fearful days and nights. The confessor visited him again, but in vain. His emancipated understanding declared him innocent, but his feelings, his religion, and his customary ideas pronounced him guilty.

"One morning we found his apartment empty. A letter lay upon the table in which he declared, that as we were detaining him a prisoner, he was justified in seeking his freedom—that he had fled, and was going to Sperata, that he hoped to escape with her, and that he had formed his resolution, if attempts were made to separate them.

"We were not a little alarmed, but our confessor recommended us to be tranquil. Our poor brother was well

watched. The boatman instead of rowing him across the river, took him to his convent. Fatigued with a long watching of four-and-twenty hours, he fell asleep as the boat rocked to and fro in the moonlight, and he did not awake until he found himself in the hands of his spiritual brethren. When he came completely to himself, he found the convent doors were locked upon him.

"Deeply distressed at the fate of our brother, we upbraided the confessor severely, but this worthy man convinced us with the surgeon's reason, that our pity was ruinous to the patient; he assured us that he had not acted on his own authority, but by command of the Bishop and Chapter. It was their object to avoid all public scandal, and to conceal the sad calamity under the veil of a secret course of ecclesiastical discipline. Sperata was to be spared. She was not to know that her lover was her own brother. She was confided to the charge of a clergyman, to whom she had already entrusted her secret. They adopted means for concealing her pregnancy and the birth of her child. She felt happy. Like most of our young women, she could neither read nor write, and therefore her commissions to her lover were entrusted to the clergyman. Believing that a pious fraud was excusable in the case of a young mother, he brought pretended news from her brother, whom he had never seen, in his name recommending her to remain quiet, imploring her to take care of herself and the child, and to leave all other things to God.

"Sperata was naturally of a religious disposition. Her peculiar situation and her solitude increased this feeling, which was encouraged by the clergyman, in order to prepare her gradually for an eternal separation. Immediately after her child was weaned, and almost before she was strong enough, in a physical point of view, to endure severe agony of mind, he began to paint her fault in frightful colours, representing that to have engaged herself to a priest was a sort of sin against nature—a species of spiritual incest. For he had conceived the strange thought of making her repentance equal the excessive sorrow which she would have felt, if she had only known the real circumstances of her case. By this course he rendered her spirit so penitent and contrite, he exalted the idea of the church and its pastors to

such a height, he explained the dreadful consequences of easily pardoning sins of this nature, and of rewarding the guilty by allowing them to be lawfully married—he demonstrated the advantage of expiating such crimes in time, and of earning by this means a crown of immortality – so that at length, like a poor sinner, she extended her neck willingly to the axe, and insisted that she should be eternally separated from her brother. Having obtained so much from her, they allowed her, under certain restrictions, to reside in her own house, or in the convent, as she herself might feel disposed.

"The child grew up and displayed an extraordinary disposition. From an early age she could run and move with great agility—she soon learned to sing sweetly, and could play the cithern almost by intuition. But she could never express herself with facility, and the difficulty seemed to arise from her style of thought, rather than from any defect in her organs of speech.

"The mother's feelings towards her child were of the most distressing nature—the representations of the priest had almost rendered her deranged. Her conduct appeared to her daily in a more culpable light, and the frequency with which she heard it compared to incest, had impressed her mind so strongly, that her horror would have been no greater if she had known all the circumstances of the case. The confessor was proud of the skill with which he had contrived to break the poor creature's heart. It was dreadful to contemplate a mother's love ready to glow with delight at the thought of her infant's existence, but struggling with the horrid idea that her child ought not to have been born. These two feelings contended in her soul, but hatred appeared to be stronger than love.

"She had long since been deprived of her child, which had been entrusted to the care of a worthy family who resided near the sea. The child soon evinced the greatest fancy for climbing. To ascend the highest hills, to run along the sides of the ships, and to imitate the most difficult feats of the rope-dancers who sometimes visited the place, seemed to be a mere impulse of nature.

"That she might do this the more easily, she frequently changed clothes with the boys who were her companions, and although such conduct was considered very unbecoming,

it was generally permitted. Her love of wandering often led her far from home, and though she frequently went astray, and continued absent for unusually long periods, she never failed eventually to return. She would then take her seat beneath the pillars of a portico before a large country mansion in the neighbourhood, where she was allowed to remain as long as she pleased. She would rest upon the steps, or at times running through the spacious hall, she would linger among the statues, and then if nothing special occurred to detain her, she would hasten home.

"But, at length, our hopes were deceived, and our confidence punished. The child one day continued absent—her hat was found floating upon the water not far from a spot where a torrent rushes into the sea. It was supposed that her foot had slipped as she was climbing the rocks, and the most diligent search after her body was made in vain.

"By the thoughtless conversation of her companions, Sperata had become acquainted with the death of her child. She received the information with calm resignation, even intimating her satisfaction that God had been pleased to take the poor creature to himself, and to save it from enduring or occasioning some more dreadful calamity.

"And now every fable was narrated which could bear any reference to the sea. It was said, among other things, that the sea required every year the sacrifice of an innocent child, but as the waves could not endure the presence of a dead body, they always cast the corpse upon the shore, and rejected even the smallest bones, though they might have sunk to the bottom of the ocean. They told how a heart-broken mother, whose child had been drowned in the sea, prayed to God and his saints to grant her at least the bones for burial, how the next storm had cast up the skull, and a succeeding one the spine, and how when she had collected them all and carried them to the church, O! wonderful to tell, she felt as she entered the sacred temple that her burden was becoming heavier, and at length when she deposited it on the steps of the altar, the child began to cry, and to the utter astonishment of the by-standers, issued alive from the linen cloth. One bone of the little finger of the right hand was missing, which the mother found after a

diligent search, and was afterwards preserved as a memorial amongst the other relics of the church.

"These tales produced a strong impression on the mind of poor Sperata. Her imagination now took a new course, and favoured the emotion of her heart. She believed that her child had expiated the sins of herself and of her parents, and that the curse and punishment which had hitherto threatened them, was now removed: that it would only be necessary therefore to collect the bones and carry them to Rome, and that upon being laid before the steps of the high altar in St. Peter's, her child would once more assume its pure flesh and stand alive before the assembled multitude. It would again recognise father and mother, upon which the Pope, convinced that it had been so ordained by God and his saints, would amid the loud jubilee of the people, absolve the parents' sins, remit their oaths, and unite them in holy wedlock.

"Henceforth her anxious looks were incessantly directed to the sea and to the beach. When the midnight waves foamed in the moonlight, she expected that the rolling surge would cast up her child, whereupon her friends would run to receive it, when it should come to land.

"She walked incessantly by day in those places, where the pebbly shore declined gradually to the beach, collecting in a basket all the bones that she could find. No one ventured to tell her that many of them were the bones of animals, but nevertheless, she buried the larger ones and retained only those which were small. She employed herself thus incessantly. The clergyman, whose unwearied exertions had reduced her to this state of mind, defended her conduct with all his might. His influence induced the neighbours to regard her not as a mad woman, but as an inspired person. and, when she passed, they looked at her silently, and the children ran to kiss her hands.

"The clergyman had informed the old woman who was Sperata's friend and attendant, of the sin which she had committed by contracting her forbidden marriage. She had therefore solemnly promised to watch over the unhappy creature during her life, and with praiseworthy and conscientious patience she had hitherto discharged her duty.

"In the mean time, we had not lost sight of her brother. Neither the physicians nor the clergy of his convent would allow us to appear before him; but to convince ourselves that he was improving in some degree, we were permitted to see him as often as we pleased, as he walked in the garden or the cloisters, or to look at him through a window in the roof of his apartment.

"I shall pass over many strange changes which he underwent, till at length he attained a state of mental tranquillity and bodily restlessness. He would never consent to sit down, except upon occasions when he took his harp and played thereon, for the most part accompanying himself with singing. But he was generally in a state of motion, though he was always quiet and tractable. All his passions seemed to have concentrated themselves into one single feeling, an apprehension of death: and hence, he could have been induced to do anything by threatening him with a dangerous illness, or with death.

"Besides his strange habit of walking incessantly up and down the cloisters, upon which occasions he would suggest that it were better if his time were spent in wandering over hill and dale—he would often speak of an apparition which constantly tormented him. He asserted that, upon waking at any hour of the night, he always beheld a beautiful boy standing at his bed-side, with a bare knife, and threatening to kill him. They removed him to another apartment, but he still declared that even there and in various other chambers of the convent, the figure pursued him. His wanderings to and fro now became more restless, and the people afterwards remembered that, about this time, he was accustomed often to stand at the window, looking out upon the sea.

"In the mean time, our poor sister seemed to be gradually wasting away, under the effects of her one single thought, of her one constant occupation. Our physician at length proposed that they should gradually mingle amongst the bones which she had collected, the fragments of a child's skeleton, in order that her hopes might be thus encouraged. The success of the experiment seemed doubtful, but they might at least expect that when she had collected all the bones of a human form, she would desist from her search, and indulge hopes of making a journey to Rome.

"This step was accordingly taken. Her attendant gradually changed the bones which had been given to her, for those which Sperata had found, and an incredible delight was instantly experienced by the poor infirm creature upon observing that the parts fitted together, and that they could distinguish those which were wanting. With great labour she had fastened the joints together with thread and ribbon, and pursuing the custom which is adopted with the relics of saints, she had filled up the interstices with embroidery and silk.

"In this manner they collected nearly all the bones. Only a few of the extremities were deficient. One morning, whilst Sperata was still sleeping, and the physician had come to inquire after her health, the old woman, in order to shew him how his patient occupied herself, took the bones from a box which stood in the apartment. Immediately afterwards they heard her leap out of bed, and raising the cloth she found the box empty. She threw herself upon her knees, whereupon they approached and listened to her cordial, ardent proyer. 'Yes, it is true!' she cried, 'it is no dream, it is true! Rejoice, my friends, with me! I have seen the dear, the beautiful creature again alive! She rose and laid aside her veil—her splendour illuminated the room, her beauty transfigured her form, she could not tread the ground, notwithstanding her exertions. Lightly was she raised on high, but she was unable to extend her hand to me. There! she exclaimed, and pointed out the way which I should follow. And I shall follow her soon, and my heart grows light to think of it. My sorrow is vanishing, the sight of my reanimated child has already given me a foretaste of heavenly joy.'

"Her soul from henceforth was filled with the most cheerful prospects—she paid no attention to any earthly object, she partook of but little food, and her spirit gradually became detached from the ties of the body. At length, they found her pale and motionless—she opened her eyes no more—she was dead.

"The report of her vision had been circulated among the people, and the reverence with which she had been regarded in her life time, was converted upon her death, into the belief that she was now a happy saint.

"As she was borne to her grave, the crowd pressed eagerly round to kiss her hand, and touch her shroud. In this impassioned excitement, various sick persons ceased to feel the pains which usually afflicted them; they thought themselves cured, they asserted it—upon which they praised God and his new saint. The priesthood were obliged to lay out the body in a neighbouring chapel; the people required an opportunity for paying their devotions—the crowd was enormous; the mountaineers, whose religious feelings are at all times easily aroused, thronged together from their valleys, and the reverence, the wonder and the adoration increased from day to day. The decrees of the bishops, which were intended to subdue, and gradually to abolish this new worship, were disobeyed. The people resisted all opposition to their wishes, and were ready to treat every unbeliever with violence. 'Did not the holy Borromeo,' they exclaimed, 'dwell among our ancestors? Did not his mother survive the glory of his canonization? Is not that great statue on the rocks near Avona intended to present to our minds, by an image, the idea of his spiritual greatness? Do not his descendants live amongst us still? And has not God promised to repeat his miracles for ever amongst a believing people?'

"When the body, after the expiration of some days, shewed no symptoms of decay, but had rather become whiter and more transparent, the faith of the people rose still higher; and, when subsequently various cures took place amongst the multitude, which the most attentive observers could neither explain nor fairly ascribe to imposition, the whole country was in commotion, and even those who did not stir from their dwellings, for a long time heard no other topic discussed.

"The convent where my brother was confined resounded, like all the neighbourhood, with these wonders; and the people felt no reluctance to speak about them in his presence, as he seldom gave heed to any thing; and his connection with the events themselves was not known. Upon this occasion, however, he seemed to listen with peculiar attention—and he took measures for his flight with such skill, that no one could ever ascertain how he had managed to escape from the convent. We learned afterwards that he

had crossed the water with a crowd of pilgrims, and that the boatmen could observe in his conduct no other evidence of insanity than a great apprehension lest the boat should be overturned. Late in the night he reached the chapel where the unfortunate object of his love was resting from her woes. Only a few pious persons were kneeling in the corners. Sperata's old friend was sitting amongst them—he saluted her as he entered, and inquired how her mistress found herself? 'As you see,' she answered, with some embarrassment. He surveyed the corpse with a sidelong glance, and after some hesitation he took its hand. Shocked at the coldness, he let it go immediately, and looking round with restless eyes, he said to the attendant, 'I cannot remain with you at present, I have a long way to travel, but I will return at the proper time—tell her so when she awakes.'

"So saying he went away. It was late when we heard of these circumstances, we then inquired after him and of the route which he had taken, but in vain! Since then he must have undergone incredible toil to traverse so many mountains and valleys. After a long time we discovered some clue to him in the canton of the Grisons, but we soon lost sight of him again. We suspect that he has passed into Germany, but all trace of him has been obliterated by the war."

CHAPTER X.

THE Abbé ceased to read, and no person had listened without tears. The Countess still held her handkerchief to her eyes, when, at length, she rose from her seat and left the apartment. The rest of the company continued silent, till the Abbé observed: "We must now consider whether we should permit the Marquis to depart without acquainting him with our secret. For who can doubt for an instant that Augustine and the old Harper are the same individual? Let us consider what course we had better

follow, as well for the sake of the unhappy man himself, as for the family. My advice would be to hasten nothing, but to wait patiently till we receive news from the physician, whose arrival we shortly expect."

They were all of the same opinion, and the Abbé thus continued, "Another question occurs to me, which it is, perhaps, more easy to answer. The Marquis is deeply moved at the remembrance of the great kindness which his poor niece received from our young friend. He has compelled me, more than once, to repeat to him the whole account circumstantially, which he has listened to with feelings of the liveliest gratitude. 'Wilhelm,' he observed, 'had refused to accompany me upon my travels, whilst he was ignorant of the connection which subsists between us. But I am no longer a stranger, with whose habits and disposition he is entirely unacquainted. I am his companion, his relation, if I may say so, and as his boy, from whom he was reluctant to separate, was the obstacle which prevented him from accompanying me, let the child now become a firmer bond to unite us to each other. In addition to the obligations which I owe to him at present, let him prove serviceable to me upon my journey, and when he returns my elder brother will receive him with joy. And let him not reject the fortune of his adopted child, for, in pursuance of a secret stipulation between our father and his friend, the fortune which had been intended for his daughter, has returned to us, and we will not deprive the benefactor of our niece of a recompense which he has so well deserved.'"

Theresa took Wilhelm's hand, and said to him, "We find here another beautiful exemplification of the truth, that disinterested actions will earn the richest recompense. Accept this strange invitation, and, whilst you render a double service to the Marquis, hasten to that beautiful country, which has already so completely won your imagination and your heart."

"I submit to the guidance of my friends," answered Wilhelm; "it is vain, in this world, to expect a complete fulfilment of our wishes. I must abandon my former firm determination, and I am overwhelmed with favours which I never deserved."

With a gentle pressure of Theresa's hand, Wilhelm with-

drew his own. "You must determine," he said, addressing the Abbé, "what is to be my fate. If I am only not obliged to abandon my little Felix, I am content with all things, and ready to undertake whatever may be considered right."

Upon receiving this assurance, the Abbé immediately announced his plan. "We must allow the Marquis to depart," he said; "Wilhelm must wait here to receive the report of the physician, and, when we have considered our subsequent course, Wilhelm may set out accompanied by Felix." Alleging, therefore, that the arrangements of his young friend would prevent his immediate departure, he persuaded the Marquis to devote the intervening time to an examination of the curiosities of the place he intended to visit. The latter accordingly commenced his journey, not however without repeated assurances of his gratitude, of which the presents that he left behind, consisting of jewels, precious stones, and embroidered stuffs, afforded ample evidence.

Wilhelm was now quite ready for his journey, and the whole party felt, on this account, more perplexed, that no news had been received from the physician. They feared lest some misfortune might have happened to the Harper at the very time when they were expecting news of his complete recovery. They accordingly despatched a courier for intelligence. He had scarcely set out when the physician entered in the evening, with a stranger, whose form and appearance were most expressive and earnest, and with whom no person seemed acquainted. They continued silent for a time, at length, the stranger, advancing towards Wilhelm, held out his hand, saying, "Do you not recognise your old friend once more?" It was the voice of the Harper, but no trace remained of his former appearance. He was dressed in the ordinary neat and appropriate costume of a traveller, his beard had disappeared, his hair was fashionably dressed, and what most of all made it difficult to recognise him, was that his expressive features bore no appearance of age. Wilhelm embraced him with the greatest joy; he was then introduced to the rest of the company, and he conducted himself with perfect propriety, little suspecting that the party had so lately become acquainted with his

history. "You will, doubtless, shew some forbearance," he said, with the most perfect composure, "towards a man, who, though no longer young, is now, after a long course of suffering, entering upon the world like an inexperienced child. I am indebted to this worthy man for the privilege of again resuming my place among my fellow men."

He was welcomed, and the physician then proposed a walk, in order to interrupt the present conversation, and lead to other topics.

As soon as they were alone, the physician gave the following account:—"The cure of this man has been effected by the most singular accident. Pursuant to our convictions, we had submitted him to a course of moral and physical treatment, and, up to a certain point, ever thing went well, but he continued to entertain the most dreadful apprehensions of death, and he would not consent to lay aside his cloak or beard. But he had commenced to take a greater interest in worldly matters, and his songs, and the tone of his ideas seemed to be more in accordance with actual life. You recollect the strange letter from the clergyman which summoned me hence. Upon my arrival, I found my patient quite altered; he had, of his own accord, abandoned his beard, and allowed his hair to be dressed in the usual fashion, he had asked for ordinary clothes, and appeared to have been suddenly converted into a different being. We were curious to learn the cause of this transformation, and, though we did not venture to make the inquiry of himself, we, at length, became acquainted with it accidentally. A glass of opium was missed from the laboratory of the clergyman, about which it was considered necessary to make the strictest inquiries, every one sought to avert suspicion from himself, and violent contentions arose among the inmates of the establishment. At last the old Harper stepped forward and confessed that he possessed the laudanum; we inquired whether he had swallowed any of it, he answered in the negative, assuring us, however, that he was indebted to it for the recovery of his reason. 'It rests with you, to deprive me of this little bottle, if you think fit, and I shall then return hopelessly to my former condition. The conviction that it was desirable to terminate the sorrows of this world by death, opened to me the path

of recovery. I thought of terminating them by suicide, and, with this view, I possessed myself of the laudanum. The possibility of freeing myself from my sufferings for ever has now given me strength to bear them, and, since I have had this talisman, I have felt myself restored to life by my proximity to death. Do not fear that I shall make use of it, but determine, as men who understand the human heart, to make me properly dependent upon life, by rendering me wholly independent of it.' After mature consideration, we determined to press him no farther, and he now carries the poison about with him in a little glass bottle, against which he possesses the strongest antidote."

They informed the Physician of all the circumstances that had occurred since his departure, and it was determined that Augustine should not be made acquainted with them. The Abbé undertook the task of watching him attentively, and of keeping him in the path upon which he had now entered.

In the mean time, Wilhelm was to set out upon his journey through Germany. If it should appear practicable to awaken Augustine's love for his native land, his relations were to be made acquainted with the circumstance, and Wilhelm was then to take charge of him.

Wilhelm had now concluded all his preparations. The Abbé at first thought it strange that Augustine should rejoice at the approaching departure of his friend and benefactor, but he soon discovered the cause of this singular feeling. Augustine could not overcome the fear which he entertained of Felix, and he wished the boy to be removed as soon as possible.

By degrees, so many persons had arrived, that the castle and adjoining buildings could scarcely afford accommodation for them all, more especially as early preparations had not been made for the entertainment of so many guests. They all breakfasted and dined together, and though they would willingly have persuaded themselves that their intercourse was full of pleasant harmony, in the secrecy of their hearts, they often longed to separate. Theresa sometimes rode out with Lothario, but more frequently alone, and she formed an acquaintance with all the landlords and landladies of the country, as it was one of her principles of domestic economy

to be on the best terms with her neighbours, and to maintain with them an interchange of civilities. There seemed no prospect of a marriage being concluded between herself and Lothario; the two sisters held frequent communications together; the Abbé seemed partial to the society of the Harper; Jarno had many conferences with the Physician; Friedrich was constant to Wilhelm; and Felix was found wherever there was any prospect of amusement. In this manner, the company were distributed during their promenades, and when they returned home, and were still obliged to remain together, they found a resource in music, which, whilst it kept them united, restored each individual to himself.

The unexpected arrival of the Count increased the number of the guests. He had come to remove his lady, and to take a formal leave of his relations. Jarno hastened to meet him, and when the latter inquired the names of the company, Jarno answered, in a tone of wild humour to which he was accustomed, "You will find all the nobles of the land assembled together, Marquises, Marchionesses, my Lords, and Barons,—we fail in nothing but a Count." They went up stairs, and Wilhelm was the first person who met them in the anteroom. "My Lord," said the Count, addressing him in French, after he had looked at him for a moment, "I am glad to renew my acquaintance with you so unexpectedly, as I am much mistaken if I have not seen you before at my castle in the Prince's suite." "I had the happiness of waiting upon your excellency at that time," said Wilhelm, "but you honour me too highly in taking me for an Englishman of rank. I am a German." The Count looked at Wilhelm with a smile, and was about to make some reply, when the other guests arrived, and cordially welcomed him. They apologized for not being able to provide him with better accommodation, promising, however, that he should be attended to as well as possible.

"Ah!" said he, with a smile, "I see you have allowed chance to make your arrangements, but how much can be effected by means of a little foresight and prudence! I beg, however, that you will not make the slightest alteration, for it would cause the greatest confusion. Every one would be inconvenienced, and that shall not happen on my account.

You were witness, however," he said, turning to Jarno, " and also you, Meister, how many persons I easily accommodated at my castle. Give me the list of the guests and servants, shew me how every one is lodged, and I will make a new arrangement, according to which, every one shall be provided with a comfortable apartment, and there shall be room, in addition, for any accidental guest that may arrive."

Jarno assisted the Count in his project, furnished him with all necessary information, and took the greatest delight in occasionally leading him astray. But the Count finally enjoyed a great triumph. The arrangements were satisfactorily completed, the names of the several guests were written over the several doors, and it could not be denied that, with very little trouble and inconvenience, the desired object was satisfactorily attained. Jarno, amongst other contrivances, had so managed, that the persons who, at the present moment, felt an interest in each other, should be lodged together.

When all these changes had been made, the Count said to Jarno, " Now give me some information about that young man whom you call Meister, and who you tell me is a German." Jarno remained silent, knowing that the Count was one of those people, who ask questions for the sake of displaying their own information. The Count continued, without waiting for a reply. " You presented him to me, and warmly recommended him in the name of the Prince. If his mother was a German, I will lay a wager that his father was an Englishman, and probably a man of rank. Who can calculate all the English blood, which, for the last thirty years, has flowed in German veins! But I will not press you further: there are always some family secrets to conceal, but in matters like this, you cannot deceive me." He then related many circumstances which had occurred with Wilhelm during his stay at the Castle. Jarno remained silent, for he saw that the Count was wholly mistaken, and had confounded Wilhelm with a young Englishman, who, upon that occasion, had formed one of the Prince's suite. The old gentleman had once possessed an excellent memory, of which he was highly proud, as he could recollect the most trifling circumstance of his youth; but now, in the growing weakness of his faculties, he was accustomed to detail as true,

the strange combinations which his fancy frequently presented to his mind. His manners, however, were mild and gentle, and his presence never failed to produce a favourable effect upon the company. He would frequently induce them to engage in useful reading, and occasionally introduced some trifling amusements and small games, in which, if he did not himself take part, he seemed to feel the greatest interest, and directed with the greatest care, and when his friends wondered at his condescension, he would say, that it was the duty of every one who differed from the world in great things, to conform himself to their habits in matters of indifference.

Wilhelm, upon these occasions, suffered many annoyances and vexations. The thoughtless Friedrich seized every opportunity to allude to Wilhelm's partiality for Natalia. And yet how could he have discovered it? What could justify him in the idea? Would not all parties, however, suppose that as they were so frequently together, Wilhelm had imprudently and unhappily made him his confidant?

Whilst they were thus engaged one day, and apparently in a humour more cheerful than usual, Augustine rushed to the door, and burst it open with a terrified look: his face was pale, his eyes stared wildly, and though he wished to speak, he could not utter a syllable. The whole party were alarmed; Lothario and Jarno, supposing that he was seized with a new fit of madness, sprang forward and seized him. He stammered out something indistinctly, but, at length, he exclaimed with a loud voice, "Do not hold me! quick—help! save the child—Felix is poisoned!"

They let him go, he ran hastily from the apartment, and they followed him in consternation. They sent for the physician: Augustine had directed his steps to the Abbé's room; they found the child, and when they asked him what had happened, he seemed frightened and amazed.

"Dear father," answered Felix, "I did not drink from the bottle, but from the glass, I was so thirsty."

Augustine clasped his hands wildly together, exclaiming, "He is lost;" he forced his way through the by-standers, and rushed from the apartment.

They found a glass of almond-milk upon the table. A small bottle stood near it, which was more than half-empty.

The physician came, and heard what had occurred. He was shocked to see the well-known bottle, which had contained the laudanum, lying empty upon the table. He called for vinegar, and had recourse to all the remedies of art.

Natalia caused the child to be carried to a chamber, and she devoted herself anxiously to him. The Abbé had gone in search of Augustine, to learn from him the real facts of the case. The unfortunate father was employed in a similar way; and upon his return he saw alarm and terror in every countenance. The physician had, in the mean time, examined the almond-milk, and discovered that it contained a strong mixture of laudanum. The child lay upon the bed in a pitiful state, requesting his father to give him no more medicine, and not to pain him farther. Lothario had sent his attendants out, and gone forth himself to find, if possible, some trace of Augustine. Natalia sat by Felix. He had laid his head in her lap, and was imploring her to help him—to give him a bit of sugar, as the vinegar was so sour.—The physician consented, and desired them to allow the child, who was frightfully agitated, to enjoy a moment's repose, assuring them that no available remedy should be left unemployed. The Count approached with a look of anger. In an earnest and solemn manner, he laid his hands upon the head of the child, turned his eyes to heaven, and remained for a moment in that attitude. Wilhelm, who was lying upon the sofa, in a state of the deepest distress, sprang up, and casting a look of despair upon Natalia, left the apartment.—The Count followed him immediately.

"I cannot understand," observed the physician, "how it is that the child does not shew the smallest symptom of danger. He must have swallowed a large dose of laudanum at a single draught; and yet his pulse seems to be affected by nothing but the remedies which we have applied; and, perhaps, by the fright arising from the occurrence."

Jarno now arrived, with the news that they had found Augustine in the garret, bathed in blood, a razor was lying near him, and he appeared to have cut his throat. The physician ran out at the intelligence, and met the servants, who were carrying the body down stairs. He was laid upon a bed, and carefully examined. The gash had penetrated the windpipe: after a copious loss of blood he had fallen

into a swoon, but they soon perceived that not only life, but hopes of his recovery remained. The physician placed the body in a proper position, united the edges of the wound, and bound it up. They all passed a sleepless and anxious night. Felix would not leave Natalia. Wilhelm took his seat before her on a stool, holding his boy's feet in his hands, whilst his head was reposing on Natalia's lap; and thus they divided the pleasing burden and the painful anxiety, until day dawned upon their distress. Natalia had given her hand to Wilhelm—they did not utter a word, but they looked at the child, and then at one another silently. Lothario and Jarno were sitting at the other end of the apartment, engaged in animated conversation, which, if the interest of our narrative allowed, we would gladly communicate to our readers. The child enjoyed a sound sleep, and in the morning he awoke, cheerful and refreshed, sat up and asked for a piece of bread and butter.

As soon as Augustine had in some measure recovered, they applied to him for an explanation of the mystery. He stated, with apparent reluctance, that upon the change of apartments which had taken place under the directions of the Count, he found himself in the same quarters with the Abbé, and that in this manner the manuscript, which contained his own history, had fallen into his hands: that he was dreadfully shocked upon perusing it, and felt convinced that it was impossible for him to live: that, thereupon, he had had recourse as usual to his laudanum, which he mixed with a glass of almond-milk, but shuddered when he had raised it to his lips: that he set it down, and hastened into the garden to breath the fresh air: and that, upon returning, he had found Felix in the act of filling his glass, which he had already once emptied.

They entreated the unfortunate man to be calm—he seized Wilhelm violently by the hand and cried, "Alas! why did I not leave you long ago? I knew that I should kill the child, and that he would occasion my death." "But Felix lives!" said Wilhelm. The physician, who had listened in silence, inquired whether all the milk had been mixed with laudanum? "No!" answered he, "only what the glass contained!" "Then, by the luckiest accident," cried the physician, "the child has drunk from the bottle! some good genius has guided his hand, and rescued him from the death

which seemed inevitable." "No, no!" exclaimed Wilhelm, with a groan, as he held his hands before his eyes, "How dreadful are the words! Felix asserted distinctly that he had drunk not from the bottle, but from the glass. His recovery is but a momentary delusion, he will surely die." He hastened out: the physician went to Felix, and caressing him tenderly, inquired whether he had not drunk from the bottle, and not from the glass? The child burst into tears, the physician whispered his suspicions to Natalia—she tried to elicit a confession from Felix, but he only wept, and continued to do so, until he fell asleep.

Wilhelm watched by his side. He passed a tranquil night. In the morning Augustine was found dead in his bed. He had contrived to deceive his attendants by an assumed sleep, had untied the bandage, and bled to death. Natalia took Felix out to walk. He was as cheerful as in his happiest days. "You are so kind to me!" he said to her, "you never scold, nor beat me, and I will tell you everything—I drank out of the bottle! Mamma Aurelia always struck me when I did so, and father always looked so angry, that I thought he meant to beat me too."

Natalia flew to the castle. Wilhelm met her with his heart full of anxiety and fear. "Happy father!" she exclaimed, taking up the child in her arms, and presenting it to his embrace. "Your son is safe: he drank from the bottle, and his naughtiness has saved his life!"

They informed the Count of the happy issue. He listened with that silent smiling satisfaction with which we are accustomed to tolerate the errors of a good man. Jarno, who was attentive to all that occurred, was unable to account for his apparent self-complacency, until, after many evasions, his Lordship declared his conviction that the child had really taken poison, but that he himself, by means of prayer and intercession with heaven, had miraculously preserved his life. He determined now to take leave of them, and accordingly his preparations were speedily made. The Countess, before she bade them farewell, took Wilhelm's hand in her own, and at the same time affectionately pressing that of her sister, she joined their hands together, then turning away hastily, she stepped into her carriage.

The many frightful and wonderful events which had so

rapidly taken place, had diverted the whole party from their accustomed regularity of life, occasioning general disorder and confusion, and introducing a feverish excitement into all departments of the household. They had altered their hours for sleeping, and rising, for eating and drinking, and for indulging in social conversation. With the exception of Theresa, they had all been turned from their accustomed regularity of existence. The men had had recourse to wine for the restoration of their spirits, and while, by this means, they acquired an artificial cheerfulness, they drove away that natural vivacity which alone gives true strength and activity.

Wilhelm was agitated by the most painful feelings. The fearful circumstances which had so suddenly occurred rendered him powerless to resist a passion which had taken complete possession of his heart. Though Felix had been restored to him, he appeared to be destitute of every thing. And though Werner's letters, containing all necessary directions for his journey, had arrived, he could not summon up courage to take his departure. All things conspired to urge him to this step. He might easily see that Lothario and Theresa only waited for his absence to conclude their marriage. Jarno was unusually silent, and seemed to have lost something of his customary cheerfulness. Fortunately the physician was able to assist our friend in his embarrassment, by pronouncing him ill, and treating him as an invalid.

The company continued to meet together in the evening, and Friedrich, that wild youth, who often drank more wine than was prudent, took the principal part in the conversation, and kept them all in a roar of laughter by his quotations and ridiculous remarks, and by his imprudent habit of constantly expressing his thoughts to himself aloud, he more than once threw them all into embarrassment.

He did not think very seriously of Wilhelm's illness. Upon one occasion, when they were all assembled together, he cried, "What is the name of the sickness which has attacked our friend? Cannot you describe it by one of the three thousand names with which you cloak your ignorance? You must have seen some similar cases. I think," he continued, in an emphatic tone, "that we shall find something like it in Egyptian or Babylonish history."

The bystanders looked at one another and smiled.

"What was the name of that King?" he asked, and paused for a reply. "O," he continued, "if you will not come to my assistance, I must help myself." He opened the folding doors of the apartment, and pointed to a large picture in the antechamber, "What is the name of that old gentleman with the crown, who is standing at the foot of the bed, and looking so unhappy at his poor sick son? What is the name of that beautiful girl who is just making her appearance with her modest roguish eyes, the unconscious bearer of the poison and the antidote? What is the name of the bungler of a doctor, who just catches a glimpse of the real state of things, and for the first time in his life prescribes a proper remedy, orders a medicine which works a complete cure, and is no less agreeable than effective."

In this manner he continued to banter. But the company bore it all as well as possible, and concealed their embarrassment under an affectation of mirth. A slight blush had in the meantime suffused Natalia's cheeks, and betrayed the emotions of her heart. Fortunately for herself, she was walking up and down the room with Jarno, and seizing an opportunity when she reached the door, she slipped out, and after having taken a few turns in the ante-chamber, she retired to her own apartment.

A general silence ensued, whereupon Friedrich began to sing,

> "Wonders we shall soon behold!
> What has happened must be told—
> What is told, we all shall say,
> And before the dawn of day,
> Wonders strange we shall behold!"

Theresa had gone to join Natalia. Friedrich took the physician to examine the picture, pronounced a ridiculous eulogium upon the virtues of medicine, and then withdrew.

Lothario had all this time been standing at the window, looking out calmly into the garden. Wilhelm was in the most pitiable condition. Even now, when he was quite alone with his friend, he could not speak for a considerable time: he took a rapid glance at his own history, and at length he thought of his present situation with a shudder. He started

up and cried, "If I am to blame for what has happened, and for what you have endured, punish me! In addition to my present sufferings, withdraw your friendship from me, and leave me to wander disconsolate through a world in which I ought long ago to have lost myself. But if you behold in me the victim of a cruel entanglement of chance, from which I have been unable to escape, give me the assurance of your friendship and your love, and accompany me upon a journey, which I dare not longer postpone. The time will come when I shall be able to explain to you what has happened to me lately. Perhaps I am now suffering this punishment, because I did not make an earlier discovery of my condition to you, because I have hesitated to explain my circumstances fully. You might have helped me, you might have assisted me at the proper moment. But thus it has always been with me. I learn to know myself too late, and in vain. How richly have I deserved Jarno's censure. I thought I had understood it, hoped to profit by it, and to commence a new life. Could I—might I have done so? It is in vain that mortals accuse themselves and fortune! We are wretched beings and appointed to misery, and it matters little whether it is our own misconduct, or higher influence, or chance, virtue or vice, wisdom or folly, that plunges us into ruin. Farewell! I shall not delay for an instant longer in a house where I have so shamefully violated the rights of hospitality. The indiscretion of your brother is unpardonable. It has brought my misfortunes to a climax, and driven me to despair."

"And what would you say," observed Lothario, "if your marriage with my sister were the secret condition upon which Theresa had promised to enrich me with her hand? The noble maiden intends that you shall enjoy this splendid recompense. She has vowed that this twofold marriage shall be celebrated upon the same day: 'His reason,' she says, 'has chosen me, but his heart requires Natalia, and my reason shall assist his heart?' We determined to watch you and Natalia attentively, we made the Abbé our confidant, and we promised him that we would not hasten the marriage, but suffer things to take their own course. We have done so. Nature has produced its proper effect, and our mad brother has only shaken the ripe fruit from the tree.

And now that we have been so unexpectedly brought together, let us not pursue a common life. Let us lead a life of activity for noble purposes. The benefits which a man of cultivated mind may render to himself and others, are inconceivable, if without aspiring to rule, he can become the guardian to many, and teach them to do things at the proper season, which, at any rate, they are inclined at some time to effect, can guide them to objects which, though they see with sufficient clearness, they can seldom accomplish with success. Let us, therefore, make a contract together. This is no enthusiasm, it is an idea quite practicable, and which has often been unconsciously executed by benevolent persons. Of this my sister Natalia is a distinguished example. Great are the qualities with which nature has endowed that exalted being. She deserves the honourable title, more, perhaps, than even our noble aunt herself, who at the time when our physician wrote his manuscript, was the most exalted being that our circle contained. Since then, the character of Natalia has gradually unfolded itself, and we may rejoice that the world contains so perfect a being."

He was about to continue, but Friedrich rushed into the apartment, exclaiming, "What sort of garland have I earned? How will you reward me? Myrtle, laurel, ivy and oak—the freshest you can find, come twine them together—my varied services deserve a varied crown. Natalia is yours. I am the enchanter who has won this treasure for you."

"He is raving!" said Wilhelm.—"I must go."

"Do you speak with authority?" inquired Lothario, seizing Wilhelm by the arm.

"By my own authority," answered Friedrich, "and with the grace of God. I was the wooer, and now I am the messenger. I listened at the door—she made a full confession to the Abbé."

"Shame upon you!" said Lothario, "who bade you listen?"

"Who made her bolt the door?" cried Friedrich. "I heard it all plain enough. Natalia was deeply moved. In the night, when Felix was so ill, and was lying half in your lap, whilst you sat by inconsolable, and shared the precious burden—she made a vow, that if the child should die, she

would confess her love, and offer you her hand. A promise of that nature must, you know, be kept under all circumstances. The clergyman will not be absent long, and guess what news he will bring."

The Abbé made his appearance. "We know it all," cried Friedrich, "be as quick as possible, you only come as a matter of form, you are not wanted for any thing further."

"He has listened!" said the Baron.

"Shameful!" exclaimed the Abbé.

"Now despatch us quickly!" continued Friedrich. "What are our arrangements? Let us enumerate them on our fingers. First, you must travel. The invitation of the Marquis comes most opportunely. Once across the Alps, every thing will be right. People will thank you for undertaking any thing uncommon. You provide them with amusement for which they need not pay. It resembles a free ball—all ranks and classes may enjoy it."

"In truth," said the Abbé, "you have already done some service to the public by such festivities, but it seems that to-day you do not mean to let me utter a syllable."

"If it is not all as I have described it," said Friedrich, "you may tell your own story. But come, come hither. We must see them together."

Lothario embraced Wilhelm, and led him to Natalia. She advanced to meet him, accompanied by Theresa. All were silent.

"Let us have no delay," cried Friedrich. "In two days you must be ready to set out upon your journey. What do you think now, my friend?" he continued, as he turned to Wilhelm—"did you suppose, when we first became acquainted, and when I asked you for that beautiful bouquet, that you would ever be indebted to me for so lovely a flower?"

"Do not remind me of those days at this moment of inexpressible happiness?"

"Of which you need not be ashamed, any more than one need blush at his descent. Those times were good, but I cannot help laughing when I see you. You remind me of Saul, the son of Kish, who went to seek his father's asses and found a kingdom."

"I do not know the value of a kingdom," said Wilhelm, "but I know that I have found a happiness of which I am not worthy, but which I would not exchange for the greatest earthly bliss."

THE END

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